My Reflections

A Collection Of My Christian Articles

Volume 2

"For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."
(1 Corinthians 13:12)

Moses Ayomikun Oladipupo

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MY REFLECTIONS
Volume 2

By

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Scripture quotations are taken from the HOLY BIBLE,
KING JAMES BIBLE

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INTRODUCTION

It is with great gratitude to God Almighty, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost that I present to us my book titled "MY REFLECTIONS." It is a brand new book but with old contents. It is the second volume of the collections of my Christian articles. I hope it blesses you.

It had been a thing of concern to me what will become of my articles should I lose my blog. Not that I expect to lose it, but it has crashed a number of times and my hosting plan expired once without proper notification or reminder. So it has been in my thoughts for a long while now to do something to ensure I don't lose my articles should I experience something worse. I also recently read an unfortunate event that transpired concerning my favourite hymn website, cyberhymnal.org (now hymntime.com), and how the owner lost his website though he now runs a new one. After I read this I decided to take the issue of protecting my articles from being lost seriously. Apart from backing up my blog regularly, the course of action I thought best was to compile them into a book. This would enable me publish it on many websites over the Internet and to have the articles in a well articulated and easily retrievable form in my personal storage. This is the primary reason of compiling this book.

Seeing this is the primary reason for compiling the book I have not done any revision to the original text published. The first of the articles was dated as far back as 2012. Surely between now and then there must be a great difference in the way I see things, in the knowledge I've acquired, and on the views I hold. I didn't bother myself revising the articles to make them conform to my present knowledge. I thought I should do that but the benefit won't

be much and therefore won't be worthwhile. The only changes that may occur would probably be in terms of the mode and grammar of presenting my points, but the central truths of the articles, being what is most important, would remain the same. Revising the articles may only make them more wordy and not necessarily more worthy of being read.

I always try to make my cover designs to be such that if carefully studied would inform the observer as precisely as possible of the content of the book. I chose the title, "My Reflections," because reflection means, "thought or consideration," and the articles are a product of my thoughts and considerations on the words of God and his revelations to me. By reflection I also meant it in the more common sense which is "an image of something seen on a reflective surface, e.g. a glass, water, etc." The cross on the cover depicts the truths I wish to present, but you can see that the reflection of the cross is not the exact representation of the actual. But it is not too far all the same. By seeing the reflection one could have a good idea of what the actual is. So my words are not the perfect representations of the truths I wish to present, but they are not far from the perfect all the same. By it we shall be able to have a good idea of the actual and perfect image so much that we can't mistake it for something else.

My key text for the book tells us that this manner of presenting spiritual truth is common to all, for it says, "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." (1 Corinthians 13:12). So our knowledge of the truth at its best are mere reflections of the actual, and in that he says "darkly," it means we only see spiritual things vaguely and not precisely. We only see in part and know in part. But a time is coming that we shall no longer see mere reflections but the actual truths themselves, we shall see

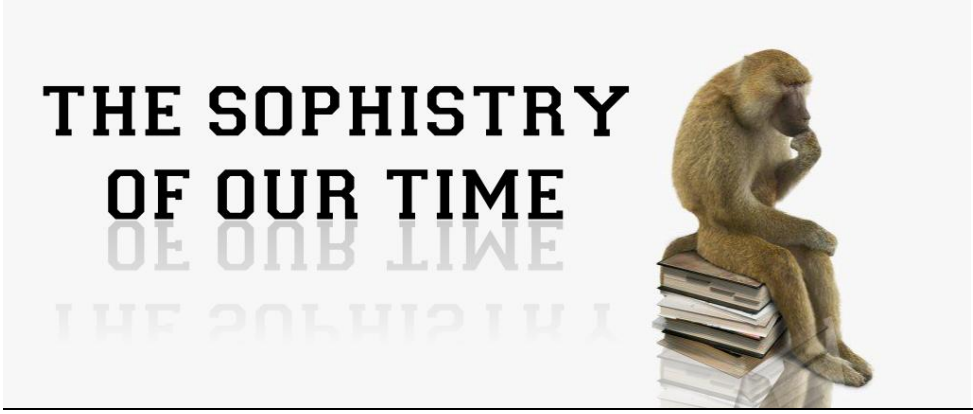
and know not merely in part but perfectly. We, at this time of imperfection, ought to be content with these reflections here and there, provided that what they reflect are actual truths not heresies. In this present time I believe that only the word of God is the perfect truth. Seeing that my articles come very short off the actual truths I wish to present, let the reader compare carefully those things he/she reads with the perfect truth (The Holy Bible).

I believe that despite this it is a useful book of good reflections nevertheless, I therefore recommend it still to the reader. I pray that as you read it it blesses and edifies you. Thank you and God bless you. Amen.

Ayomikun

THE SOPHISTRY OF OUR TIME

Posted on September 25, 2016, this is an article to show that christianity is in fact a religion.



"If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

(James 1:26 - 27)

The great man Martin Luther the reformer said, "Let us beware of sophistry, which consisteth not only in a double tongue, in doubtful and screwed words, which may be construed any way, but also it blossometh, and flourisheth in all arts and vocations; it will likewise have room and place in religion; it hath usurped and got a fine painted colour, under the name of holy writ."

In the time of Luther, sophistry may have arisen in this form or the other, but in our time, one of the ways it is arising is to put in doubt the undoubtable with this question, "is Christianity a religion?" Yes, of course

Christianity is a religion, but in our time, questioning the obvious seems an intelligent thing to do.

As Luther said, sophistry, such as this, blossoms and flourishes because the average Christian has that good proclivity in delighting in anything that will make him different from people of other religion, so taking advantage of this, the sophists argue that Christianity is not a religion unlike Budhism, Islam, etc. So the doctrine spreads like wildfire unchecked. But the truth is that Christianity has been, remains, and will always be a religion (James 1:26-27), the only true and pure religion, and others being founded on falsehood are not a religion in the first place.

This doctrine is double tongued as it comprises of vain arguments about what is not adequately defined, so you could argue this way or that way and seem right in both cases. You can say yes and say no and no one can really understand what you mean.

When people say Christianity is not a religion, just a simple question would reveal how such people lack understanding of what they talk about. Simply ask; "if you say Christianity is not a religion, then what is it?" They'd mumble this and that and not give an answer. They'd say it is a lifestyle, and the ungodly habit of sagging the pants is also a lifestyle. What lifestyle? Then they'd say it's a relationship, and every child in this world, the moment he is born is born into several relationships. What relationship? A relationship with Christ? And does that relationship not teach you how to live and how to render service to God. In that relationship do you not learn to deny all ungodliness? If they'd do good justice to the question in trying to define Christianity, they'd have defined what true religion is in is entirety. If in defining Christianity you define a religion, then why is Christianity not a religion.

- **The Christian faith tells us the origin of our life.** "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. (Genesis 1:1).

- **The Christian faith tells us both elaborately and concisely what our purpose here on earth is.** "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

- **The Christian faith tells us the mode of worship acceptable to God.** "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth (John 4:23 - 24).

- **The Christian faith teaches us how to live our lives, though it be ours.** "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." (1 Peter 1:15 - 16).

- **The Christian faith teaches us what the fate of man is.** Both that of the sinner and the that of the justified. To the sinner, "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and

whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." (Revelation 21:8). To the justified, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." (Revelation 21:7).

- **The Christian faith teaches us how to get to Heaven**, "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6).

These things constitute religion. Every religion has such claims. But the Christian faith is the only one whose claims are true, thus making it the only true religion, and by extension, the only religion.

Listen to these intelligent words of John Jewel (1522-1571), the one time Bishop of Salisbury, in his book, The Apology of the Church of England, “unity and concord doth best become religion: yet is not unity the sure and certain mark whereby to know the Church of God.” Look at that. The man wrote not against these sophists of our time, for this myth based argument was not in existence then, yet in his

brilliance and understanding of what the Christian faith is, he refutes unknowingly these sophists of our own time. How much more would he have routed them in this vain doctrinal stance of theirs.
So brethren, this Christian faith that teaches me service to God in helping the poor, the fatherless, the less privileged of any category, that teaches me to pray for kings and those in authority, that teaches me to love my brother from my heart, that teaches me to deny ungodliness, this Christian faith is my religion. This is your religion too. For this reason, when I fill a form and see a provision for religion, I proudly tick Christianity.

So, listen to these words of Martin Luther again, “Let us beware of sophistry, which consisteth not only in a double tongue, in doubtful and screwed words, which may be construed any way, but also it blossometh, and flourisheth in all arts and vocations; it will likewise have room and place in religion; it hath usurped and got a fine painted colour, under the name of holy writ.” Is not all these true about the claim that Christianity is not a religion?

May God help his church and save her from all vain sophistries of all forms and fashion in Jesus' name. Amen.

Artwork for cover image design gotten from www.johnlund.com
Photo of John Jewel gotten from etc.usf.edu

YOUR LIFE'S A BEAUTY

Posted on December 20, 2016

The life of everybody is a beautiful story. There are times when we seem so confused, depressed and bitter, and we could even say, "my life's a mess," but it's not true. If only you could see your end, you'd know that no matter what the circumstance you're in now, your story is interesting, sweet, and captivating.

Sadly (or luckily) our life is a book of which we can't flip to the end without going through each page one by one. So we must patiently go from day to day before we reach the end. I know of someone who told me that when she reads a book and gets to a place of high suspense, when she can't bear it any more, she'd flip a few pages to see the end of the suspense, then she'd say to herself something like, "Ah, he didn't die. Phew," then she'd go back and continue reading from where she stopped. If you ask me, that's a bad reading practice.

As the author of one published novel and another in the writing, I can say I'd be disappointed if you told me that you didn't go through my book from page to page. I'd be disappointed because my goal would only be achieved if you go with me from page to page as I reveal to you surprises one after another. This is the best way to enjoy a novel. So life is fashioned in a way that you can't even flip

to the next page so that you can enjoy it the best way possible. God surely did this, as the author of our lives, because he didn't want us to kill the fun of living.

The God who authored your life is a loving God. So you can be rest assured that your life's a beauty. In the end you shall know. He said, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end." (Jeremiah 29:11). So you see. With this understanding, why bother, just live from day to day in patience, courage and positivity of mind. When he says, "an expected end," I have never really understood whose expectation he refers to. Is it ours or his own expectation. But we can be sure that his thoughts and expectations are far better than ours. So let's be glad that he says his thought are peace and not evil. That he says, "expected end," means that none of what happens to us is a mistake. Everything is a part of his glorious plan.

No matter what life brings your way, be patient, be strong, be courageous, be cheerful, and be positive. You'd be amazed in the end that you were the main character of the super interesting story of your life. All you need to do is walk in his ways according to his will. God bless you and thank you for reading.

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THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST TO A BROTHER

Posted on February 5, 2017.

"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not."

(2 Peter 2:1 - 3)

Several years back, about the times of my mid teenage-hood (about ten years now), we had a brother in my local church who wished to seek diligently the face of God. This brother fasted many days and it was reported that he collapsed. When he gained himself, he came to the church and told us what really happened. He told us that when he fasted and while he was unconscious, he had a revelation of Jesus Christ with convincing proves. He said that Christ

revealed to him a lot of evil and wickedness being done in the church. He said that Christ told him that he would destroy all denominations and build himself a church for the end times. This brother right there and then before us all denounced his membership of my local church. Though I had followed carefully all he said with interest and delight, I got disappointed at him at this point.

I, at that time, supposed that if God were going to destroy churches, it would be these new generation churches that teach damnable heresies, preaching prosperity, and teaching that it is okay to live in sin because Christ has died. I admired this brother's zeal and was happy for his revelations, but I felt he went too far in denouncing my local church which at that time I considered to be a light in darkness.

However, after a long period of time passed (few years), God began to open my eyes too to see the evils in the church. First through the scriptures, I saw that many things done in the church were not scriptural. I saw the increment in compromise. I saw the fair yet damnable doctrines of prosperity spreading and pervading every sphere of the Christian church. Things that were peculiar to pagans and the occults being introduced by slow and steady degrees into the church (power of thoughts, teachings that glorify man, etc.) Later, he began to open my eyes to even the evils of the clergy. He made me to see the causes of their division in the church. Then did I begin to see clearly the truth of this brother's revelations and the wisdom of his denunciation of my local church. I saw my local church at the time of his revelation as quite a vibrant church. I wouldn't say the same with the knowledge I have now. At that time, they were not into this prosperity nonsense and grace that is taught as God's gift of lasciviousness and licence to sin. But now prosperity has

pervaded every sphere of teaching and we hardly are fed with anything good for the soul. Messages are suited more for the perishing, not to bring them to Jesus to save them, but to keep them in the church unsaved.

Now in such cases what is expected of us? Many well meaning Christians are trying to be faithful and loyal people and would think that maintaining allegiance to their denomination (I.e. even in their error) is a sign of dauntless devotion of a true Christian. They just want to sit still and pray for the denominations which Jesus has marked for destruction. That is just like attempting to pray the Devil into a saint. It is not a holy love to stick by that which has represented evil and all traits of hell though it pretends to be on the side of Christ. But this ought not to be so. Why would you seek to keep alive that which Jesus has marked for destruction? For indeed these denominations are marked for destruction for their heresy and evil. Would you then desire to keep these evils alive against the will of Christ?

In 1 Kings 20:42 God said through his prophet to Ahab, "Because thou hast let go out of thy hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people." Let not your life go for any of these denominations. If we let these denominations whom the Lord has appointed for destruction go by restraining ourselves from speaking the truth so as to maintain this false peace, our own life (the life of the present day church) shall go for it and her people (i.e. the people of the true church) for their people (false brethren yet bonafide members of these denominations). We would sink into such a bitter and regrettable state of error, spiritual deadness, and reproach before the onlooking world.

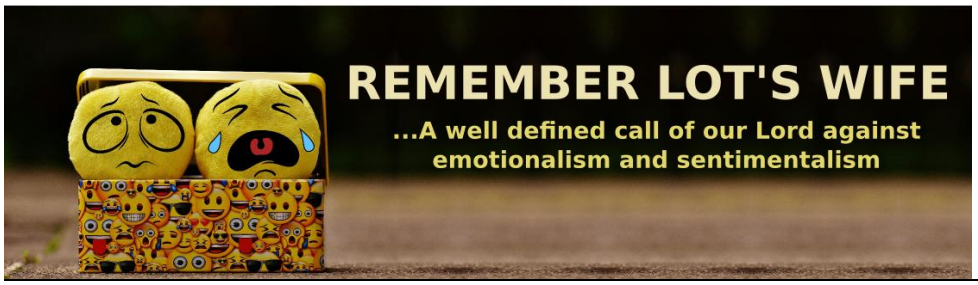
I would encourage every Christian to draw closely to their Bibles in reverent study and seeking of the will of God. Let us open our eyes to see these evils and rebuke them. Surely under the light of the truth no denomination can stand for they all have a foundation of error, but must burn away with the intensity of that glorious light. The error, the extortion, deception, etc. must cease at the presence of the light of the truth.

Let us take our place in the ranks of the army of Christ, pick up the sword of the spirit (the word of God) and fight this glorious fight of truth so that righteousness and truth may reign. As Moses called out, "who is on the Lord's side?" (Exodus 32:26) and all the Levites came to him, may we as priests of the royal priesthood come over to the Lord's side in true-hearted devotion to his good will. It's a cheap warfare, they can't prevail. They're fallen already. Let's be bold and do that which the present time so requires. God bless you.

Prayer: *Dearest Lord Jesus, help us your people, as your servants, to do your bidding and service in your church and in this world whether it be in building up or pulling down. Grant us the strength and courage to do all that we ought to do of your good will and pleasure. Through our lives powerfully express and accomplish your will. In your dear name we ask. Amen O Lord.*

REMEMBER LOT'S WIFE

Posted on May 10, 2017,



"Remember Lot's wife."

(Luke 17:32)

The story of Lot and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is well known, and this calling of our Lord to remember the wife of Lot is of great importance to us especially today. It points out to us the need to war against emotionalism and sentimentalism. Both emotions and sentiments are diametrically opposed to reason. And reason is one of the key things that ought to guide a Christian after the Bible which of course is the final authority. That these two things are so opposed to reason, as important as it is to we Christians, shows how dangerous they are should we allow them to influence us.

Now, about Lot's wife. Many things has been unfairly and baselessly said about that woman in respect to her looking back when the commandment was clearly not to look back. Some say she loved the sinful life of Sodom and Gomorrah, and for this love she looked back. Others say she had a lot of wealth that she had left behind in the rush, and for this reason she looked back. Other things are said about the woman which are both unfair and baseless.

All that the Bible says about her is this, "But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt."

(Genesis 19:26). There was no explanation as to why she did so. It may have been simple curiosity, or anything else. All those assumptions were probably made to form a beautiful sermon. That practice of twisting and turning scriptures and adding spices to it to make a sermon sweet must stop.

From the Book of Jasher we can however get a convincing reason why she looked back and derive evidence of it from scriptures. It is written in the book of Jasher this way:

“...and Ado the wife of Lot looked back to see the destruction of the cities, for her compassion was moved on account of her daughters who remained in Sodom, for they did not go with her. And when she looked back she became a pillar of salt, and it is yet in that place unto this day.” So it was compassion for her daughters that made her look back.

When the angels brought the news of the plan to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah to Lot, the Bible says,

"And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place: For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it. And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law. And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city." (Genesis 19:12 - 15).

So we see here that the husbands of the daughters of Lot who were married thought he was joking, so they ignored and refused to go with him. So the angels in the morning hastened him and said he should take the two that were with him and leave. So for the sakes of the compassion Lot's wife had for those other of her daughters who were left behind, she looked back.

It is the same way that many today, on the basis of emotions and sentiments, disobey God's direct command. Lot's wife was very justifiable compared to the nonsense emotionalists and sentimentalists we have today. She had a reason to be emotional and be moved by her compassion for it was the thought of her very daughters that made her look back, but today people get emotional over nothing and disobey God's command.

People hardly try to convince one another in anything at all without trying to stir the emotions of those they're trying to convince. And on the basis of nonsense emotions draw stupid conclusions. As I've said before that emotionalism and sentimentalism are diametrically opposed to reason. Using them in trying to arrive at logical conclusions is futile. It is completely irrational to appeal, in the course of discussions, to sentiments instead of reason. It is this blunder of attributing so much to emotions and sentiments that many stupid arguments and ways of life seem justifiable. For once the emotions are stirred, the brain switches off or stops working partially.

I once heard a sermon in which the preacher was clearly trying to show how tenderhearted he was. The preacher spoke of a man who's brother wanted to travel, so while he was away, he told his wife to stay with this man (for reasons I'm yet to understand). In the course of time, this man started sleeping with his brother's wife and ended up

impregnating her. He knew he couldn't hide his folly any more, so he went secretly to our tenderhearted preacher man and told him all that he did. The man said, he doesn't want to open up to the church and he's leaving the church because they'd expose him to shame, rebuke him openly, and suspend him for a period. He said he couldn't stand that so he said he was going to his tribal chiefs who were into diabolical practices to resolve the matter, for this would not expose him to shame. So our tenderhearted preacher told us that he was confused about what to do. He said he didn't want the man to go to Hell. He said that rather than allowing the man go to his tribal chiefs and get involved in diabolic practices, he had to beg the man not to go, but return to the church and that he would not be openly rebuked, neither would he be suspended, he'd just continue with life as if nothing happened. Does anyone realise how very stupid this is? As if that were not enough, he tried to liken his actions to that of Jesus going after Peter to restore him. When I heard his nonsense sermon I laughed at such a glorious show of sentimental folly. Did not the Bible clearly command us saying, "Them that sin rebuke **BEFORE ALL**, that others also may fear." (1 Timothy 5:20). Did Paul not in the fifth chapter of 1st Corinthians, with the leading of the Spirit, ask the Corinthian church to expell the man that acted with a wickedness as grievous as this asking them to hand him over to the very Satan? So what is so great to hand over such a man over to Satan whether it be through his going to his tribal chiefs or not. Discipline is an integral part of the church. But this man, on the basis of the emotions and sentiments he tried stirring in the hearts of his hearers, sought to justify his disobedience, refusing to rebuke such wickedness openly and suspending such a wicked fellow from the fellowship. Arrant nonsense.

Discipline by suspension is very scriptural. How it should be done and for what it should be done would be another days topic, but people wrestle against it, bringing up how it is incompatible with emotions and sentiments. Of course they won't use these words, but they would cover it up with words such as love, compassion, etc. (misdefining them to mean sentiments and foolish emotions). One person when talking about suspension asked his hearers, "can love act that way?" Of course love corrects even by discipline. But sentimentalism which he's secretly referring to can't act that way because it is foolish. Many, with this weird style of argument, seek to convince people that the church ought not to suspend people at all. In other cases, people also on the basis of false compassion argue that the church should allow people to divorce and remarry on account of compassion. These and many others do they foolish put forward having nothing to appeal to but emotions. Very sad.

On a lighter mood, One day while commuting, a woman sat in the sit in front of me, as we drove along, she saw someone who just alighted from another vehicle having 500 Naira and was looking for a change of 100 Naira to pay his fare. Just for this, she became so emotional, you needed to see how emotional she became. She started breathing heavily almost sobbing just because she saw someone looking for change. She quickly pleaded with the driver to stop the vehicle, and calling the man over, she gave him the change he needed. The driver asked her, "I hope you have the change to pay me?" She responded, "don't worry, let's go." When she got to her destination she brought out 500Naira to pay a fare of 100 Naira. We were shocked at this woman. The driver started fuming because he had no change for her and she kept us there a long while searching her bag in vain for change. She saw someone in need of change and must have thought to herself that she

ought to help, but ended up being very unfair to her driver for whom she ought to have kept her change. She was also unfair to us for keeping us waiting while they went about looking for change. So emotions, when we allow it ride us, can make us be unfair, even wicked, in the very attempt of being kind.

It is on the basis of emotionalism and sentimentalism that the diabolical movement of feminism has gained so much ground. I tried to read the argument of feminists, and all they do is make a beeline for your emotions trying to switch off your brain. Once they succeed, they'd start pouring out all their silly arguments. They'd first of all tell you of how some men were brutal to their wives and use this as a basis of their arguments. Now feminism does not seem bad at surface level, but it presents gender equality to us which is completely alien to scriptures. There is no hint of gender equality both in the New and Old Testaments. Of course neither is there any hint that womankind should be intimidated or battered, or denying them what should be of benefit to them, but gender equality is purely antithetical to scriptures, and therefore clearly of the devil.Even if these things should exist in the world created by God contrary to the standards of her creator, it is sad enough, but sadder is the fact that it is fast establishing itself in the church. People want women to act in every capacity a man can act.

The Bible clearly forbids a woman to speak in the church, that is they shouldn't even ask questions (1 Corinthians 14:34-35, 1 Timothy 2:11-12). But on the basis of emotionalism and sentimentalism of the spirit of feminism, they're allowed to preach and teach and act in whatever capacity a man can. Views contrary to this as obedient to scriptures would be seen as injustice, unfairness, and prejudice against womankind. Take a wholistic view of the whole matter, look at its origin which is that women were being battered. Because of this battery, the foolish solution is to make her equal to a man. After that (with the brain switched off) a long chain of argument ensues. At the tail end of the nonsense process, women should be allowed to preach and speak in the church. So the summary is this, women were battered in their homes, for this reason, they should preach in the churches of Christ. But it is really on the basis of silly emotions and sentiments, because of stories (whether true or untrue) of men beating their wives, we no longer should keep the commandment of God that forbids a woman from speaking in church, not even to ask questions. Isn't that silly?

I once told someone about this issue of women speaking in the church, and he turned on his emotional side on me and asked me, "how would you feel if you were the one that was

denied from speaking in the church? Would you be happy?" I was amazed at such a question. So is it now a matter of feelings and not of obedience and doing that which is right to do? I think of two people chattering while the preacher is preaching and distracting everybody else, and an usher came to them and saying, "shhh, stop talking." Then they turn to the usher and ask him, "how would you feel if you were the one that was denied from speaking while the preacher is preaching? Would you be happy? He's talking, even loudly, why shouldn't we talk?" I'm sure he'd be puzzled and dumbfounded. Same way I get so puzzled by the way people reason on these matters.God demands many things from me and other men too, how do we feel? He says that we mustn't lie even for advantage, how do I feel when I hear that? He said I shouldn't steal even if I'm sure I won't get caught. How do I feel about that? He asked me not to fornicate even when it hurts no one, how does that make me feel? Of course it is obvious that when God commands, what you feel is insignificant. We are not a law to ourselves but God is the giver of the commands we obey if we truly love Jesus. Does our feelings change his commands? Does not the heart that love him gladly obey it? Does such a heart seek to change his commands. Should not a Christian woman gladly obey this command? Should not a sensible man encourage them to do so? But we find sentimentalists pouring out vain arguments that makes the commandments of God, as good as they are, seem unfair or prejudicial to womankind.

But let us step out of the world of emotionalists and think in a rational way, would such people who have been so rebuked to keep quiet while the preacher is preaching not feel ashamed and keep quiet seeing that they were doing what ought not to be done or inappropriate for the time and place they found themselves? So also, should a woman not feel ashamed to speak in the church? Should they not

on that account keep quiet? For indeed the Bible clearly states that it is a shame for a woman to speak in the church (1 Corinthians 14:34-35). But all these are ignored by people who allow their emotions ride them about like mules.

In my part of the world, people engage themselves so much in festivities. whether they're marriages, wedding anniversaries, etc. and even burials. These things are good but the work of the Lord requires urgency. The Bible clearly tells us that the times are evil. "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil." (Ephesians 5:16). This is especially true of our time above all other times because there's so much to be done for God seeing the immense privileges technological advancement has brought us. Just look at the crowd we could reach through social media. Ought we not to spend our time preparing impactful messages that could change these crowd? Just visit Project Gutenberg website and see millions of useful books that are out there for free. Ought we not to withdraw ourselves from these mundane things to afford ourselves more time to study? Look at the increasing depravity of the societies all round the world. Ought we not suppose to withdraw ourselves to prayer faith and back up that faith with the good works of Christian activism (which of course has nothing to do with resisting authorities or being violent)?

Look at the church and the poor state she is in. Ought we not by prayer and persistent good works seek for change and reformation that would bring revival to us? The list goes on.These things we ought to do for God because this is what his will is for us at the present time. How shall we then, take of our time which belongs to God and spend it on things that are of little benefit to anyone, all in the name of showing love to celebrants and not wanting them to feel bad that you absented yourself from their occasion? It is not good for a Christian to spend his time in these things.

Even marriage was permitted on the basis of our weaknesses and not because of its expediency all because we need our time for the things of God. Paul advised that where possible it is better to be single. How much less important should we see festivities. In this case also, the sentiments of showing love to people by attending their occasions causes a lot of people to displease God, spending their time on things of little importance while there's a raging fire calling for our attention. In warning about the end times, Jesus was particular about festivities when he said, "And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all." (Luke 17:26 - 27). Let us not displease God forsaking his work to please men by attending all their occasions.

Some justify their actions by saying that God said we should rejoice with those that rejoice, but you see, rejoicing with someone is quite different from going to their occasion to eat rice, dance, or show everyone how white your teeth is. Rejoicing with those that rejoice is all about inward happiness that people are doing well and have the cause to rejoice. This we ought to express in appropriate ways

including sending congratulatory messages of well wishes via any convenient medium. We must therefore limit our festivities and unnecessary activities and devote our time to God.

The problem is that many people wilfully choose emotions and sentiments over scriptures because while emotions and sentiments are soft and tender, and able to accomodate and excuse all our innate avarice and fleshly lusts, the scriptures is hammer and fire (Jeremiah 23:29), unable to tolerate or excuse such. So they hypocritically lean towards emotions so as not to appear evil as they truly are.

Jesus was not an emotionalists nor was he a sentimentalist. You may see him being moved with compassion (Mark 6:32), you may see him weeping at Lazarus' grave (John 11:35), you may see him having compassion on the widow whose only son was dead, (Luke 7:12-13), and many other cases in which he was moved with compassion, but they all led him to do God's will and not to do otherwise. He had compassion, but it was given its rightful place as mere feelings and not as to allow it direct him even to do what is contrary to God's will. God must be ultimate in all things.

An emotionalist of Jesus' time, wanting to be his disciple, came to him with all that emotion and said, "Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father." (Matthew 8:21). An emotionalist would probably have asked the man whether or not he were so dumb to come ask him first of all before going to bury his own father with special emphasis on "HIS OWN." Some may call him closer to interrogate him if he really knew who a father was. They could ask him, "do you know that your father was responsible for you being in this world? Do you know that he laboured sometimes beyond his capacity to be able to afford a good living for you? Do you know that your father was a shield around you while

you grew up? Do you know he died for you? Em, sorry, I meant paid your school fees? Do you know? Do you know? Do you know? And are you first asking me before you'd go bury such a person?" Then with sobs of anguish at such disregard for emotions and sentiments, he'd shed a tear or two, one through his eye and the other through his nostril. And all that and all that. They may not go that far in ridiculousness but emotionalists make emphasis as senseless as what I portray here. But hear Jesus' response lest you mistake him for an emotionalist, "Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead." (Matthew 8:22). Jesus was all about doing the will of God, and his compassion could never stand in the way. Jesus knew it was the father's will that men follow him in every sense of the word "follow," and the death of a man could not lead him to advise anything contrary to that. Jesus was a compassionate person, but never was he an emotionalist or sentimentalist. So let us be clear on that.

So are you compassionate? Let it move you to preach the Gospel to the dying world. Are you compassionate? Let it move you to give selflessly to the needy. Are you compassionate? Let it move you to fulfil the law of love especially to the household of faith. These are the ways Christian compassion ought to move us. It should move us inline with God's will and not against it. Never should we disobey God's command and seek to justify on the basis of sentiments and emotions. In all things, Jesus is our perfect example. Let us live like him.

Now, as our Lord asked us to remember Lot's wife who allowed compassion for her daughters lead her to sin against God's direct command. We would do well to bring to sober reflection the fact that though she was far better and justifiable compared to the silly emotionalists of our time, she got the judgment of God in all its severity. So

also, every man, woman, boy, or girl, that on the basis of emotions or sentiments sin against God with the hope of justifying it on this account instead of repenting would get the judgment of God in all its severity. All these preachers who further compromise, all these women who mount pulpits to talk, pray, or preach, and do all the things God forbids them from doing, shall all get the judgment of God in all its severity. I therefore plead that we repent of this evil, push emotions and sentiments out of our faculty and allow only scriptures, the Holy Ghost, and reason to guide us.

May God help us all by his grace. Amen. Thank you for reading.

Prayer: *Dear Jesus. Help us to be like you in every way. Help us not be emotional and sentimental in our reasoning but trust in your word and the Holy Spirit's leading alone to guide in the way we should act. Help us not to allow the mundane and unimportant things of this world to distract us from the perfect will of the Father. Help us dear Lord. In Jesus' name have I prayed. Amen.*

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THE VIRTUE OF FEAR

Posted on May 21, 2017

"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

(Philippians 2:12)

Contrary to what many of the vain motivational speaker we have today would teach, fear is an integral part of the Christian faith. This is different from the fear of God which is the deep reverential fear. The fear I'm talking about is not a fear of reverence but a fear of terror. A fear that causes one to tremble, and tremble because of a fearful expectation. The expectation of eternal damnation that belongs to as many as God shall condemn. It is in this fear that we must work out our salvation.

It is also not that Adamic fear that makes one run away from God, but the fear that constrains you to do God's will. It is the fear that he who said he would execute judgment on the wicked is not only able but is really, most certainly, going to do it. It is the fear that keeps you away from that wickedness.

What is the reason for such fear? It is glaring that if the glory to come by the working of God to those who believe is

beyond what the mind can conceive (1 Corinthians 2:9), the terrors to come to those who don't believe is also beyond what the mind can conceive. For if the glory to come is beyond what the mind can conceive because it is by the working of the incomprehensible power of the Almighty God, so also is the terrors to come to those who don't believe by the working of his great power. For the greatness of this terror, we must fear. With the terror of these we must work out our salvation so as not to end there.

Hebrews 4:1 says, "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." So we see that just as the Bible admonishes us to be wise, to be courageous, to be patient, etc. it also admonishes us here to fear. So we must learn to fear horrors of Hell, for this is wise to do. Was it not in fear that Noah acted wisely to build the arc? And was it not in not fearing that the rest of the world perished in the flood? For Hebrews 11:7 says, "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." Noah prepared the arc for fear of perishing in the flood. It was by the actions of that fear that he saved his soul and that of his house. So also many would end up in hell because they are not afraid of Hell. They make light of it and so shall they end up there unless they repent.

Now let such fear not be seen as a thing that is unwise to feel. No, for the Bible says, "A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished." (Proverbs 27:12). It takes a fool to see the things about Hell and eternal damnation and not with complete earnestness and resoluteness, being moved with

fear, seek to avoid it in any way possible, even if it is by means of the cross alone.

Now let us consider the Hell we're talking about here. Two major things make Hell a place of immense torment which are, its torment, its duration. Let's consider its torment. If a person steps on a smoking match stick that is put out but merely glowing red, he'd take off his foot at once. If a person were to put your finger in a flame as gentle as that of a candle, you'd probably scream for pain and force your hand out of it. If a you were to find yourself in a building engulfed in fire, your struggle and improvise any possible means to get out. But all these are nothing compared to the torments of hell. I've read about occasions where tormentors torture people by pressing the glowing end of a cigarette to their skin, but what shall a man then say about fire burning with brimstone and sulphur and being fully immersed in it? So based on the torment alone, seeing that every wise person seek to avoid these little forms of pain (little compared to Hell), how much more should a man bow his shoulder to bear the cross of Christ if it is the only means by which a man may avoid the torment of Hell.

Jesus also says plainly, "And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him." (Luke 12:4 - 5). He didn't just say we should fear him but also gave us the reason why we should fear him. He did not tell us that because of his majesty, or because he has done so much for us, how dare we pay him evil for good, and so on which we can term to be that reverent fear that every Christian ought to also have. The reason he gave was rather that we should fear him because he is able both to kill and also to cast in hell. So Christ here is admonishing us to fear with the fear of torment and not mere reverential fear. For this reason, we are not to fear others, whether they be terrorists, armed rubbers, etc. We must fear God alone for his mighty power with which he can cast into Hell. We can be sure by all these that fear is a Christian virtue.

Let's move on to its duration. The worst thing about Hell is not its torment but for the endlessness of the time that one shall spend there. Here's why. Suppose you were in a room with no doors and only windows with burglar proof. With you is this boring guy who only taps away in a boring and annoying way on the strings of his guitar. You can't sleep, you can't read, you can't concentrate, you can't do anything. You're convinced that he'd never stop, and you can't make him stop, and you'd be there in that room for a

week listening to this boring guy. Outside this room is bustling with activities, fanfare, enjoyment, and other social stuff, but you're trapped here. I suppose if ever you get out of that room sane, you'd never return there again. But let's say you're to be there for a month. Or for a year. Or a century. Or forever, world without end. That would be indeed Hell. You're not being tormented with any fire or burnings, but for the duration of this mild unpleasantness it would be a Hell for the individual. Now consider that is not just boredom, but the very fire of Hell burning the person, not for two days, not for a week, not for a month, not for a year, or a century, not even a millennium. It shall be forever and ever. That is just an imagination of what Hell is like but it's worse in reality.What then shall we say of that. Shall not a man who is wise gladly take up his cross and follow Jesus for the sake of these only. It is in the fear of these that we are told to work out our salvation with fear and trembling.

---The Rewards of Fearing---

"For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." **(Isaiah 66:2)**

"Hear the word of the LORD, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the LORD be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed." **(Isaiah 66:5)**

We can see that there is a reward for those who tremble at the words of God. For this is wisdom to do so. In the first verse, God says, he look to him that is poor, of a contrite spirit and trembles at his word. So, despite the fact that you pray and pray, God will not look to you (give you any attention) except you possess these characteristics including trembling at (fearing because of) his word. This fear is that fear that'll make your abstain from what displeases him.He also says in verse 5 that to those who tremble at his words, their persecutions shall be turned to joy and the persecutors shall be ashamed. All these for just trembling at the words of God. Fear of Hell as revealed in the Bible is therefore a Christian basis for choosing the cross.

---Warning Against Casting Out Fear---

"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love." **(1 John 4:18)**

Very often people use the verse above to make fear an evil thing contrary to what we have looked at earlier. It is not only peculiar to our time. Old time writers too do the same and there is nothing devilishly wrong in that, but we must at all times have every part of the scriptures in consonance with every other part. If we haven't understood a portion of the Bible in a way that it agrees with every other part, we haven't understood it yet. So this verse of necessity can't be contradicting the other parts of scriptures that asks us clearly to fear.So here we go. The Bible, in this verse, did not say that the man who is perfect in love casts out fear but love itself casts out fear. When we do not take up the responsibility of love, we are sure to act in a way that is detrimental to our spiritual growth. So we must work on ourselves to grow in the love of God until fear of itself, being driven away by love, leaves us. Here's what I mean, we don't have to be engaged in driving out fear as many Christians do. They employ many portions of the Bible for this fear driving enterprise. They politely ask it, if it doesn't leave, they rebuke fear, if it doesn't still leave, they stab it in the head, perhaps with the "sword of the spirit," etc. But it is not our lot to do that.

Another portion of the same epistle of John explains this to us where it says, "But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." (1 John 2:5 - 2:6). He later went on to say, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." (John 14:21). We're told here what it means to be perfected in the love of God. It is by keeping his commandments that we know that we are perfect. This is in total agreement with what Jesus said saying, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." (John 14:15). So, we

can understand fully well that John meant to say, only when we keep God's commandments consistently are we perfected in such love. When we attain to such a state, we are made perfect in love. Such perfect love showing itself in obedience to the commandments of God is what drives fear away.

We probably can understand this in the light of the government of the world. The Bible says, "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." (Romans 13:3 - 14). When your actions are right and according to the laws of the land, you walk boldly and confidently knowing that no ill would come your way because of your actions. However, if you've been doing evil, you'd always live in fear even when there is really no reason to fear, in the sense that no one is making any attempt to discover your faults. But if you're doing well and you receive a letter to submit yourself for inspection, you'd gladly do so because your good works would be made manifest by the very same inspection. So when through love, expressing itself through obedience, you have done the will of God, fear must go for it cannot stand in the presence of such love. It is in this sense that the apostle John says, "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God." (1 John 3:21).

Imagine Jesus fearing Hell. Imagine him praying out of fear, "O God, forgive me this evil I've done. I don't want to go to Hell." Such fear is impossible for an one such as Christ to have. Jesus could never fear Hell and here's why, he confessed plainly,"I do always those things that please

him." (John 8:29). Were this to be our stance, we too would have a perfect love that would cast out fear, for when we ALWAYS do his will, we no longer have fear of torment. Here is a confirmation of this, "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world." (1 John 4:17). When we have become as he is in an outright, absolute, and consistent obedience to God, we have boldness (absence of fear), and this is because our love is now made perfect.

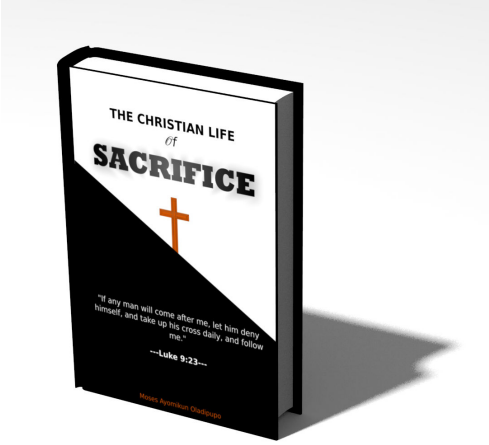
So, dear brethren, I do not say that we can become perfect in any way while in the flesh, but let us allow our love to grow stronger and stronger, daily, towards perfection. Let us also allow love to do its work without our interfering. Let us be focused in allowing the love of God to consume us wholly and forget about casting out fear for when love has consumed us wholly, fear would of itself, in the presence of perfect love, depart from us.

So this virtue called fear is one reason why it is wise and rational to choose the cross of Christ, seeing that the land is sweet and rest is good. For reason of the fear to lose this sweet land and good rest, as well as the fear of incurring damnation to our souls, we choose the cross of Christ. To do otherwise is irrational, foolish, unwise, reckless, and suicidal.

Prayer: *O God, I see that the call of Jesus to us, asking us to carry our cross and follow him, is far more glorious than it appears. As a matter of fact, it is glorious directly contrary to how it appears ignominious. Dear Lord, in the light of this, help me and all your children to be always conscious of that good eternal rest and that pleasant land of the Heavenly Jerusalem set before us, and for this reason, and other wise reasons, make this wise choice of bowing our shoulders beneath the burdens of the cross. Let*

us choose this instead of the passing vanity the world is ever offering. In Jesus' name. Amen.

From my book "THE CHRISTIAN LIFE OF SACRIFICE"
Please download the full ebook HERE. It is absolutely **free**.


THE CHRISTIAN LIFE
of
SACRIFICE
"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."
---Luke 9:23---

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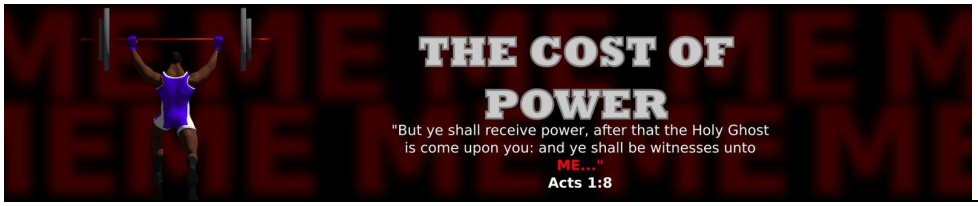
THE COST OF POWER

Posted on June 25, 2017


THE COST OF POWER
"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto ME..."
Acts 1:8

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto ME..."

(Acts 1:8)

"Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: and thy glory above all the earth;"

(*Psalm 108:5)*

There's little or nothing that a man can do of himself if it be not given him from above. Many would wish to have power to do wonders and shake the earth. They would wish to go right into a nation or community given to worship of demons or belief in false religion, and with one powerful sermon convert that whole nation with everyone shedding tears profusely in repentance. We would wish to stand before a temple of worship of demons and with our hand stretched to heaven, pray one prayer in the name of Jesus and the whole temple come crumbling down with demons fleeing out of it to the conversion of all those who witness it or hear about it (as an unverifiable story tells us that apostle John did in Ephesus). We all would wish to do such great things, but we may not be willing to pay the price for it. Some probably have read about Martin Luther, John Wesley, Cyril and Methodius (the great Scandinavian missionaries), and others, and seen the great things they did and how they are held in such honour, and would wish to do great works for God. Sometimes it is for the sake of

glory that people wish to do great things for God, but at all times we must do things for his own glory alone. This should be done out of true sincere love for him.

There's no way that a man can move with such influence for God without power given him from above. It is how to get such power that I wish to talk about in this article.

The price for power is simple. It comes by having a right focus and mindset. We must have motives which is always to seek what is to the glory of God. Refusal to seek ours at any cost. If only we can do this, we shall have the power of God working so mightily in us.

In the first of the main texts of this article, Jesus before his ascension said to his disciples, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto ME..." (Acts 1:8). Please note my emphasis on "me." Now this appears to be very funny. It seems as if Jesus is saying something like, "I will give you all the money you need to buy any exotic spice, ingredients, etc. as much as you need to prepare a sumptuous meal, but the sumptuous meal is for me, me, and me alone. That would be mean wouldn't it? But Jesus was not in any way being mean if truly we know how this is for our benefit. However, he's pointing to us that if we are to receive power, it must be to his glory alone and none else's. It is by having this mindset that God alone must be glorified that we can receive power.

In the second text, the psalmist wrote, "Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: and thy glory above all the earth;" (Psalm 108:5). This is the mindset we must have. God must be above all. We therefore must seek nothing apart from God's glory. For if he's lifted up above all things else in our lives, then there must also be nothing beside him. For it is

written, "There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God. (1 Samuel 2:2). So there should be nothing beside God in our lives. Nothing apart from him. Nothing of equal importance to him. Nothing should exist at all in our lives except under him, that is for his glory alone. This is the mindset we need to receive power from God.

Let us not deceive ourselves in trying to be dubious. Dubious in the sense that when we think or claim to be seeking his glory, we are somehow still seeking our own glory. This often happens in the guise of giving testimonies. Where we say God has done mightily but beside the testimony of his mighty works, we also speak of our own "incredible" works too. Probably something we claim that provoked him to action.

In trying to talk about sincerity in living for the glory of God alone, I'll refer to two characters as examples of these. Two incredible great men of power. One from the Old Testament, and the other from the New.

Moses

"(Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.)"

(Numbers 12:3)

First we shall look at the man Moses. The manifestation of God's power through Moses is one that is most obvious to all the world including outside the Christian circle. As a matter of fact we could consider him the chief of the Old Testament prophets and not be wrong, for we can draw this conclusion on the basis of the testimony of no lesser a one

than God himself. For it is written, "And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?" (Numbers 12:6 - 8). He also enjoyed the manifestation of God's presence like no other. It is written, "And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend..." (Exodus 33:11).

So, why did God move so mightily in him and by him? Why did God walk so closely with him? Why did God speak to him mouth to mouth? It is simply explained in the verse; Numbers 12:3. Meekness. That's all. His incredible meekness resulted in the great manifestation of Power in him and through him.

We know little in scriptures about why the Bible called him meek. We couldn't easily judge him to be meek based on what we read of his actions recorded in scriptures had not the Bible clearly bestowed such praise on him. However, when I read the Book of Jasher, I was surprised at how many glorious things that Moses omitted about himself in his own writing. You won't believe it.

Now I would take the pains to warn you that I refer to the book of Jasher only because the Bible itself refers to it in two portions, that is in Joshua 10:13 and 2 Samuel 1:18. I do not wish that other books of creation or historical books of that kind should be read. Many of them are false and demonic. Please avoid them. I however encourage Christians to read the book of Jasher. You'd find it very useful.

When Moses ran away from Egypt and lived in the wilderness of Median, from his record, you'd think he just sat there for forty whole years fondling his wife and tending sheep. Very laughable to think of. But within that forty years he did wondrously and even reigned as a king. I don't want to write an article with a scary length, so you go read it for yourself in the Book Of Jasher. So amazing. But he remained absolutely silent on this in his own record that you'd think it never happened, had you not read it in the record of another. Such meekness is incredible and when we read the Bible says, "(Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.)" (Numbers 12:3), we now understand better what it means. And seeing that by him God did incredible miracles and that the Bible clearly associates his closeness to God with his meekness, we now see that the price of the power given him was meekness. It is by that quality of being able to seek the glory of God alone so as to forfeit all your own glory for his sake. The more you have this quality the more power you shall receive.

We shall now proceed to the New Testament to look at our second case study.

Peter

"(For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)" ***(Galatians 2:8)***

It is not that I wish to exalt one apostle over another, but just for the purpose of this study I wish to use Peter as a case study. Indeed we mere men with the limitation of our blindness lack the ability to judge on certain matters. So it

is futile to start judging one person over another, whether they be apostles, revivalists, etc. We just can't be rational to judge any with our human limitations. The very verse above tells us that God worked in Paul the way he worked in Peter. So let it not make any exalt one apostle over another or judge in any way similar to that. That aside, let's see what we can learn from Peter for whatever we see in him can also be seen in others who manifested the power of God.

Peter was a man of power. We can't read anywhere in scriptures that people really contended with Peter. He was a man of simplistic power so much that when he speaks, what always follows is submission.

On the day of Pentecost in the second chapter of the book of Acts, after people mocked the disciples who were speaking with new tongues, Peter and others rose up to address the crowd and what followed, without any opposition or gainsaying, the people simply said, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Absolute submission.

In the fourth chapter if Acts, when Peter and the other apostles were questioned about why they were preaching the Gospel, he responded with such boldness that they marvelled and didn't know what to say in opposition to that.

In the fifteenth chapter of Acts, when men rose up to start teaching that except people get circumcised, they cannot be saved. Paul and Barnabas argued with them to no avail. They came all the way to Jerusalem and right there the argument went on and on. But as soon as Peter spoke, we read in the twelfth verse, "Then all the multitude kept silence..."

When I considered these things, I got to wonder, why was it so? And I got to realise that there was nothing responsible

for such effectiveness than power. The same power at work when he raised the dead, the same power at work when he healed the lame, the same power at work when his shadow cured the sick was the same power at work when he spoke. Very effective were his words. What we see in Peter was sheer Power. Not eloquence, not charisma, not vibrancy nor anything of human making. He was not formally educated, he was just a fisherman, yet he was so effective in service because of power alone. The power given him from above.

Never expect to see any form of evangelical transformation without power. Never think that eloquence, charisma, fervency, etc. can achieve anything for you. If you want result, you need power. Not the futile power you find around, but that which comes from above. With eloquence, you may preach to an atheist and instead of becoming a Christian, he only becomes an agnostic. With charisma, you may preach to an undevoted pseudo-religious man and instead of becoming a Christian, he becomes a fanatic. You may even preach with everything and get someone to profess Christ, yet remains in his sins. But true evangelical transformation can only be by the power from above, that power that at the simplistic speaking of Peter, the man of power, three thousand souls got converted in one occasion (Acts 2:41), five thousand men (excluding women and children) in another (Acts 4:4), and so on.

The deeds of Peter always easily yielded results because of power alone. Not eloquence, not high learning, not anything, just power. But how or why did he get this power? Let's see.

The Gospel of Mark was Peter's account written by Mark. Yet I was surprised at the way the Gospel of Mark went. Everything that pertains to Peter's praise was amazingly omitted. There are a number of ways in which Mark

completely skips the things that seem to be of Peter's praise but I'll make reference to two.

When you contrast Mark 6:47-56 and Matthew 14:23-32 which is a record of how Jesus came to his disciples by night walking on the water. When they got scared, Jesus called out to them in verse 50 saying, "Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid." the Gospel of Mark immediately went on to say in verse 51, "And he went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered."

The Gospel of Matthew however narrated how Peter walked on water the way that Jesus himself did and no other apostle did. This was a wonderful thing for him to emphasise to his own glory, but the meek man omitted it completely so much that if you didn't read it in the Gospel of Matthew, you won't ever guess that it happened. He didn't see any excuse for making any reference to his walking on water. His glory was just not his business. He was concerned about talking about the wonders of Jesus and that was all.

Next when you contrast Mark 8:27-30 and Matthew 16:13-19, which both speaks of Jesus asking who people say he is. Peter responded "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Mark omitted "the Son of the living God.") The Gospel of Mark (Peter's account) stopped there omitting completely the amazing things Christ said to him in return. The Gospel according to Matthew goes on to tell us of what he omitted saying, "And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar–jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the

kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

These things are so much to his praise, things for which he's to be held in deep reverence, but he omitted them in his incredible spirit of meekness. Go through the Gospel of Mark (it didn't even bear his name) with the image of Peter in mind and you would understand better the spirit of meekness at work in him.

As far as Peter was concerned, no praise was due to him. The tedious effort to record accurately the life of Jesus to which he was closely part of was to God's glory alone. He cared nothing for himself. And this reveals a lot to us why God used him so mightily. All that demonstrations of power was because Peter knew that God was to be in the centre of everything. That the purpose of our lives is to seek the glory of God and magnify him. When we truly, like Peter, become meek, humble, and selfless, we shall begin to know more of what power is. Humility and meekness as we can see in Peter is the cost of power.

We can see this mindset in everyone who God used mightily. Not just Peter alone. We can see it magnificently displayed in Paul's writings, and as a matter of fact, every other apostle. So this was the secret of their power. If we want power to accomplish God's will for the salvation of those who see his power at work in us or those who hear it, let us do likewise.

The Sad Trend Of Today

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous,

boasters, proud, blasphemers... Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof..."

(2 Timothy 3:1 - 2, 5)

Today however, contrary to these holy men and the host of others, we see the contrary amidst professing "Christians" and "holy men". In the wake of the mad rivalry of church owners, it seems that stupid boasting can't be resisted. Many so called men of God are just pursuing praise knowing this would make men think (merely think) they are approved of God.

It's a sad trend of today which informs us of why there is little or no manifestation of God's power today. To cover up for these powerlessness, still in the same vanity that drives God's power away from us, some go as far as cooking stories to look like wonders are happening through their ministries. We shall not go deep in the things that people do to deceive people that God is working wonders through them. But they are real and heartbreaking. Either people coldly accept to sit powerlessly, or they coin up stories to deceive people. This is what the Bible refers to as lying wonders in 2 Thessalonians 2:9.

But, let us not be deceived. It is clear that, as in the hymn of Chris Bowater, the time is ripe in the nations for works of power and authority. Let us through meekness and humility and God-centredness seek this power and it shall be ours.

---Conclusion---

"But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble."

(James 4:6)

You see, God said, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy." (Exodus 33:19). Because of what is written in this passage of scripture, people often think that God shows mercy to just anyone at random. Rather than coming to this conclusion, why not ask, "on whom is he willing to show mercy?" This is the same with power. He gives power freely, but on whom is he willing to bestow his power? From all in whom we see that God manifested his power, one thing is common; meekness. So let us be meek so that he'd be willing to give us his power.

The Christian life that will reflect the power of God must be such a life that is absolutely dedicated to the glory of God and his glory alone. No secret lurking place for self glory. Surely, if you make an idol of yourself, seeking that others should praise or worship you by glorifying yourself, God will oppose you and make you understand that you are but man. Let us humble ourselves before the Lord, and he shall lift us up (James 4:10). He shall lift us up by manifesting his power in us to the salvation of those who witness it or hear about it.

It is not an easy thing to live in way as to be able to manifest God's power. It's hard. It is right to live well and to serve God zealously with all the might, which things are praise worthy, meaning we must live in a way that is praise worthy but without seeking praise. This is hard. But this is the cost of power. Let us go for it.

1 Peter 5:6 says, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:"

Now, when is this due time? That time is likely on the judgment day. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians, "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and THEN shall every man have praise of God." (1 Corinthians 4:5). Mark my emphasis on "then." There is the due time for every man to receive his praise from God. That time is when the Lord shall come. That time is the day of judgment. Yes there are times of minor glorification of the followers of Jesus while in the flesh, but we must know that the appointed day for receiving praise from God is the day of judgment. So while that day is yet to come, focus on the glory of God alone. Let us in the spirit of patient meekness and humility earnestly pray for power from above to come upon us and his universal church. As we do that may God hear us and grant us power in Jesus' name. Amen.

Thank you for reading.

Prayer: *Dear Lord, we know indeed that the time is right in the nations for works of power and authority, yet we know with far more certainty that all power and authority belongs to you. Dear Lord, help us to have a change and renewal of our minds to be vessels meet for the manifestation your power and authority. Dear Lord make us humble and meek. Let us seek your glory alone and none of ours O Lord. And as we do this, give us power from on high to win the nations for you in Jesus' name. Amen.*

This article is from a book I'm writing titled **"THE BLESSED CRUSADE."** It may not be coming out anytime soon, but please subscribe to get a notification of when it is available. It's going to be available for free. Thank you and God bless you.

THE IMPORTANCE OF EXAMPLES TO LEARNING

Posted on Jul 23, 2017

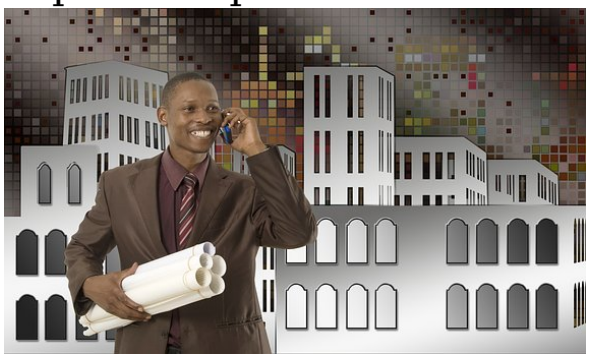
To The Glory Of Jesus Our Perfect Example

"Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed..."

(John 20:29)

An example means an illustration serving to clarify or prove something. Understanding is a very tough process. To hear is easy, to know is not so easy, but to understand is tough. Some things are easier to understand than others, but in cases where understanding becomes tricky, the best solution is to make use of examples.

Sometimes even language is limited in explaining things. Assuming someone asks a very seemingly easy question which we all know the answer, let's say, "what is the meaning of come?" Simple right? When someone tells you come, we know what to do, but how do you explain it with words? Think of that for a while. Now the dictionary explains (with words) that come means, "to move or travel toward or into a place thought as near or familiar to the speaker." Now that is confusingly interesting. We knew easily what come means by examples and not with words. Probably as kids before we knew the word, we only knew that when mummy or daddy says come to someone, they approach mummy or daddy. So we knew by examples what words at tender age could have confused us with. So when mummy and daddy says "come" to us, we approached them too, though we knew not the meaning in words, yet we understood perfectly to respond rightly. So examples are

able to explain to perfection in details what words cannot explain. 

For this reason, while the understanding capacity of young ones are still very limited, we ought to, as much as possible, make use of examples to aid their learning. Now in adults too, there are things that requires an understanding capacity which is beyond us, so we must also seek examples to be able to learn so as to understand things adequately. Usually these comes in cases not of understanding what, but of understanding how. It is easy to understand WHAT, but understanding HOW is difficult in many cases. Let's say an instruction is given to an architect, "build me a house." He knows WHAT it means to build a house, but HOW the client wants the house built is not understandable by that statement alone. Now to fully understand HOW, there has to be a whole lot of dialogue between the architect and his client before and after commencement of work. The long dialogues shows how hard it is to understand HOW. But assuming there is a fine house somewhere of which the client wants an exact replica, this now serves as an example. So when he says instead, "build me a house exactly like that one." The architect immediately knows exactly HOW. Why? The example.Take also in the case of acting. The director says to the actor, "you will run up to that shovel and stop." He knows what to run up to something is, but since acting sends out message with everything including gestures, he won't know exactly how to go about it. But when the

director says, "you'd run up to the shovel and stop. Run like Usain Bolt did on TV yesterday." Now the actor, knowing HOW, would say sadly, "I can't sir." So the point is examples are very powerful.

Knowing HOW in many cases is tough especially where details are required. It is also tough where there are two or more things similar to that which is being referred to for which cause one can easily make a mistake. Should someone say, "it is good to be special," but since special is similar to odd, people in trying to be special may end up odd. If someone says it is good to be an activist, that to a good extent is ambiguous. Does he mean we should go ahead to burn down government properties in protests? Does it mean we bully people? To understand this ambiguous statement would probably require publishing a Code of Activism to explain all that you mean so that people don't misunderstand you. But if you have someone who has been a good activist that fits all that you mean, he becomes an example and you can always refer to him rather than go through the arduous effort of writing a Code of Activism.

Now examples does not lose its meaning by the change that language undergoes. The word "quite" in Britain means completely, while in America though having the same origin of language, it means "fairly significant extent." English Language has evolved a great deal even during its formation. All the languages of the world evolves and keeps evolving. This makes words to lose or alter their meaning over time. But examples doesn't.

For these reasons, using of examples is very important today as we see the common practice of either mistakenly or deliberately twisting and obfuscating the truth. Today, many good things are painted bad, and many bad things are painted good with what seems to be concrete facts.

Obfuscation of truth is very possible because there are a lot of lies that are similar to the truth. So making use of examples would help a great deal.

I really love Jesus for the way he uses examples in so many things. It means he knew the importance of examples. He used the mustard seed to explain about the Kingdom of God which we wouldn't have understood with words. He used natural occurrence to explain things of deep spiritual meaning which we can't naturally understand. He made wonderful use of example to explain exactly what he means so that you just can't misjudge it to mean another.

When he prayed for unity of the church in John 17:21, this informs us of how our unity is highly important to him. However today, in the name of unity, people wish to make wider the narrow road so as to unify everybody into one unholy fold. This they try to achieve by trying to persuade people to be indifferent to heresy and errors. So this way of being one is similar to what Jesus describes in his prayer to the Father for they both can be defined as being one. However, Jesus uses an example here too. He said, "as we are one." So his oneness with the Father serves as an example to us so that we can see exactly how he wants us to be united. We know his unity with the Father was in purity, holiness, in truth, etc. It is therefore clear that these things must characterise our unity if we are to maintain the identity of the church of Christ. So anyone wanting to create an unholy mixed multitude in the name of Christian unity is in a conspicuously grievous error.

When Jesus spoke of perfection in Matthew 5:48, he said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." So he wasn't saying we should be perfect in any sense of the word in which we'd like to take it, as we could have a perfect cook, a perfect dribbler, a

perfect artist, a perfect pianist, and even a perfect liar. His reference was the Father. The Father was the example he placed before us. Therefore, in looking at the Father, we can know exactly what he is referring to.

In Mark 10:14, Jesus gave an example of a little child when speaking about how we ought to receive the kingdom of God saying, "Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." Jesus used examples in innumerable other ways. For this reason, it is impossible to take him out of context. The only way one can misunderstand him is by not paying close attention to his examples.

The happier thing is that not just does he give us examples in definitions, he himself is our perfect example. When people try to bring up issues about the Christian life with screwed words and by misdefining things, we can always refer to him to rescue the situation.

As our example we must follow him in all he did. We stand for what he stood for and have the values he had. For this reason, we must pay close attention to how he walked on earth and derive from him a pattern to live our own lives.

Today, so many damnable heresies are flying everywhere pleading to each Christian mind to accept them, but we must look at Jesus first. While so many of these heresies tend to say that a Christian cannot suffer, we know that Jesus did not only suffer, but he also died suffering. But he rose victorious. The Bible also tells us plainly that he set us an example of suffering (1 Peter 2:21). So we see how the life of Jesus has served as a worthy example to the silencing of such obfuscators of truth.

So also, in everything else that pertains to Christian living and doctrine, referring to Christ helps in defining most

accurately what ought to be done or not be done, what ought to be believed and not be believed. Let us be fully convinced that Jesus is our perfect example in all things and so as Christians, we must always come to conclusions on everything with Jesus our perfect example in mind. And without him, let no conclusion be made.

Babes Of The Kingdom

1 John 2:6, "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked."

Jesus called those who followed him little children (John 13:33). John, in his epistle, also used this phrase, little children, a lot in referring to his readers and rounded off his first epistle using this same phrase. Paul too called the Galatian Christians little children (Galatians 4:19). This was not because they were toddlers, but because when it comes to the things of Heaven, they were yet babies. The same way we all are babies while in this flesh. For this reason, not only is our understanding of heavenly things limited but even the capacity of our mind to understand heavenly things is very limited.

If Jesus were to come and and start speaking with theory and definitions about Heaven, we would get so confused. As confused as when a child is told the dictionary definition of come. So in our limited understanding capacity, we would do ourselves a whole world of good by observing Jesus and getting understanding from what we see in him. This is so

important and that is why Jesus said in the verse we've quoted before in this article that "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." (Mark 10:24). So if we don't see ourselves as children with a limited understanding capacity so as to trust in Jesus to derive understanding from him, we shall of necessity wreck our faith. So we all are babes of the Kingdom of God. We may be mature in Christ, but we are still babes of the Kingdom of God and must keep learning every day from him the way little children learn from observing their surroundings.

Let us never assume we know anything or have a mind with the capacity to understand anything about Heaven. Understanding heavenly things for us, except our mind is opened is as hard as Rocket Science is to a child of four. No matter what we have attained to, we must know that the perfection of Christian maturity is Christ and so we must ever learn from him.

Lest we think Paul and other apostles called others little children to exempt themselves, hear what Paul says, "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." (1 Corinthians 13:9 - 12). So we see here that he speaking of himself and the Christian brotherhood, he likens our present state to that of child and when we get to Heaven, he likens that to manhood. We all, while in the flesh, are babes of the Kingdom.

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." (Ephesians 4:11 - 13). All the working of the different Christian ministries are for the perfecting of the saints. This perfection as we can see is Christ. Just as babes of this world learn by observing adults around him, so if we must grow in understanding and anything else, we must maintain a steadfast gaze on Jesus and have him for a perfect example in all things.

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Corinthians 3:18). By a steady gaze on Christ our perfect example we can forget about the theoritising of anything. With simple gaze and absence of words, written or spoken, we can still come to that full maturity of Christ. Even when we see any theory presented to us as helpful, compare it with what you see in Christ. If it reveals more to you about Christ, please accept it with both hands. If not, refute and reject it.

So important is this practice of maintaining a gaze on Jesus and having him as our perfect example that Thomas à Kempis began his wondrous book titled The Imitation of Christ with these words, “He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, saith the Lord. These are the words of Christ; and they teach us how far we must imitate His life and character, if we seek true illumination, and deliverance from all blindness of heart. Let it be our most earnest study, therefore, to dwell upon the life of Jesus Christ.” The rest of the book, which I passionately recommend to every

Christian for meditative study, emphasises the goodness of this practice.

Today we have so many false religion and doctrine flying everywhere. The amount of false doctrine that are so close to the true Christian doctrine are so much and hard to tell. Heresies both within and outside the fold of Christ tend obfuscate the truth. Don't worry, just look to Jesus our perfect example.

We are so blessed to have Jesus for a perfect example. Thank you for reading and God bless you. Amen!

Prayer: *Dear Lord Jesus, help us to realise our limitations pertaining to heavenly things. Teach us to observe your ways and your life and thereby be healed from all blindness of heart and other human predicaments. Help us to grow into the fullness of your stature. In your dear name we pray. Amen.*

From a book I'm writing 'THE SOLDIERLY LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN" in the chapter "Warring Against Obfuscation Of Truth." To be notified when it is published, please subscribe for newsletter below.

WHAT DEFINES SPIRITUAL SONGS

Posted on August 17, 2017

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." ***(Colossians 3:16)***

"Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;" ***(Ephesians 5:19)***

One day, as I was in a Sunday School preparatory class, we talked on the subject of worship (which we of course know also entails singing), and we had Uzza and the Arc of Covenant for a case study. The event which saw the end of Uzza. This was to inform us that worship has to be according to God's pattern and not the way we wished. I came to realise as we studied along that in Uzza's heart, there was no contempt for God. I suppose there was deep reverence both for God and the Arc of His Covenant, but because the children of Israel were doing the right thing the wrong way, God struck him dead. As we studied, the thought came to my mind, in worship, what defines spiritual songs? I asked it in the class, but someone tried to reduce it to just music genre. Which of course we know it is

not. Just like in the case of Uzza, the state of our hearts in respect to reverence for God is important but showing reverence through obedience according to how he has commanded is equally important. Desiring to sing spiritual songs is good, but we must define it according to scriptures lest we die a spiritual death while thinking we're doing the right thing.

After this, I did a little online survey with this question, "Please what defines spiritual songs?" I also referred to the two scriptures above for consideration in answering this question. However, I got only likes, no comment except one comment which in the end was no comment at all. Not receiving any response, I surfed the net but what I found was ridiculous. Someone even wrote that our singing of spiritual songs can be sometime morbidly likened to drunkenness. Another trying to differentiate between hymn and psalms said, "psalms are inspired by the Holy Spirit while hymns are not." To him, hymns are just Christian poems. It is funny, if not sad, how we've let such an important question go without an answer and how okay we could be to have it remain without an answer. I couldn't go from article to article reading such horrendous errors in search of an answer, so I sought to consider this important question and come up with an answer that would be valid both scripturally and in agreement to reason. My findings is what I present to you in this article.

The person who commented (the only comment I got) on my online survey suggested that what is sung in church can define what spiritual music is. That is to say spiritual songs are songs sung in the church. However, while that is true in an ideal case, considering church practice in today's church can't help us in defining spiritual songs, because some churches allow only hymns, while others allow songs with more rhythm, while yet some others go all the way to

allow hip-praise (aka gangster-praise). The practice of one church condemns the other, so church practice of today can't help in defining spiritual songs.

Before we go too far into this considerations, what is most important to understanding what defines a spiritual song can be well observed in the two key verses of this article (Colossians 3:16, and Ephesians 5:19). We can easily perceive through these scriptures and other texts that psalms and hymns are so similar that they can be used interchangeably. As a matter of fact, the definition of psalm among few others is "a hymn." So we can be sure that they are very much similar if not entirely the same. The similarities in the first two mentioned types of songs informs us also that the third, "spiritual songs," ought also to be very much similar to the first two mentioned, if not entirely the same. For who can argue that psalms and hymns are not themselves spiritual songs? So by the understanding we have about the spiritual songs of hymns and psalms, we may derive a more accurate understanding of what makes a song spiritual, for they must of necessity be similar to hymns and psalms, if not entirely the same. This, I suppose, is the best way by which we can safely derive the true characteristics of spiritual songs, and thus the definition.

Before we go into trying to draw out the characteristics of spiritual songs, we must make it absolutely clear that spiritual songs are not entertainment music with Christian sympathy. Spirituality is diametrically opposite to entertainment or amusement. It is either you are seeking entertainment and not spiritual edification, or you're seeking spiritual edification and not entertainment. Edification profits the spirit, but entertainment profits the flesh. The Bible clearly says, "For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth

to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." (Galatians 6:8). While we most definitely can not equate entertainment music to feasting with devils (for indeed there are many non spiritual music that are not bad), we must be wise enough not to characterise them as spiritual just because they've got Christian sentiments in their wordings.

Christians of today need to understand fully well that while entertainment is not bad in itself, entertainment worship, or doing spiritual things in an entertaining way is not only bad but evil. A.W. Tozer pointed out that entertainment worship is as evil as bead counting done by the Roman Catholics. So we must make sure we don't sow to the flesh. Not being able to do spiritual things without a desire for entertainment is a serious symptom of a deadly spiritual disease. As a matter of fact you're already spiritually dying, but are on the life support of entertainment. If you go on this way without changing your ways, you'd still die anyways. If you feel this symptom that you just can't do anything spiritual without entertainment, please flee to Jesus for healing. As always, when you go to him, it is always you who has to do all the changing of ways, not him. "He is the Lord, he changeth not." Go to him in repentance, ask him to revitalise you, and be ready to change your ways.

Now, in singing hymns and psalms, is it for entertainment that we have it sung (rather than spoken) or is it for edification? It would be easy to say also, "well, even in singing hymns people get entertained, so if the song I listen to entertains me and also has words of Christian sympathy in its lyrics, what could be wrong with it?" Now you need to know that hymn and psalms are not meant to entertain and they can't entertain. Yes they can be enjoyed but they can't entertain you, for entertainment must have amusement.

This would be a bit tricky to be able to fully explain for there are feelings here that can seem similar but are yet far apart. This is because the spirit feels many things in common with the body. It can rejoice, it can be satisfied, it can be starved, it can be bored etc. For this reason, it would be hard to differentiate the feelings we get from spiritual songs and entertainment songs.

However, we must know that while hymns fills its lovers with joy so also does entertainment its listeners. But the difference is that hymns, by edifying the spirit brings joy to the spirit of its singers and listeners, but entertainment songs also brings happiness to the listeners and singers, but externally and not to the spirit. We can see in the Bible, how feelings could be very similar, yet very far different and apart. Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." (John 14:27). Jesus acknowledges here that the world can as a matter of fact give peace, but the peace that he gives is that which is felt in the spirit, while that of the world is founded on external things. But they both give people a feeling of peace. So also spiritual songs gives joy, but not as entertainment giveth.

To go further in differentiating spiritual feelings from fleshly feelings, Paul wrote saying, "I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation." (2 Corinthians 7:4). So even tribulation makes him joyful. Most definitely, this joyfulness is not attached to anything external, but is that which is felt deep in the spirit. There are joyfulness that a person can feel that also are not felt in the spirit but are feelings attached to external things. Jesus also rejoiced in the spirit (Luke 10:21) and this is opposed to rejoicing for external things, e.g. passing an exam, gaining promotion, etc. That is how the difference between enjoying hymn, psalms, and

spiritual songs is to being entertained. They may have some similarities, but they're far apart. The spiritual man enjoys hymns because it edifies his spirit while the carnal man enjoys entertainment because it gratifies his flesh.

If hymns, psalms, and spiritual songs were entertaining, why then can't some people enjoy it? Some even say we're singing burial songs. Why is it so if not that they're carnal? And it takes the spirit of a spiritual person to be edified and rejoice in being edified.

Yes, people can learn to enjoy hymns without being spiritual, or maybe they were brought up that way to enjoy hymns. As there are always counterfeits of true virtues, so also the virtue of enjoying hymns has its counterfeits.

Whether or not there is a counterfeit, spiritual songs are definitely not entertainment music with Christian sympathy. When you listen to a song, ask yourself if that song edifies you. Sincerity is needed to answer aright. Should you insincerely say a song edifies you when in truth it does not, you'd be doing yourself harm. But he that is spiritual really knows the songs that stirs in him those spiritual yearning that drives a man into deeper devotion to God. The song that does this is spiritual.

Next, a spiritual song, when listened to, must of necessity produce the fruit of the spirit. Principally love, and every other thing that comes with it. It is written, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." (Galatians 5:22 - 23). So if it is spiritual it must produce these. It must produce Love, not lust. Joy, not sadness. Peace, not trouble. Longsuffering (patience), not haughtiness. Gentleness, not rowdiness nor violence.

Goodness, not naughtiness nor meanness. Faith, not unbelief. Meekness, not pride. Temperance, not looseness.

Also with these virtues of the fruit of the Spirit must come all other Christian virtue from the self same spiritual songs. Christian virtues such as soberness (1 Peter 4:7), contentment (1 Timothy 6:6-8), purity (1 John 3:3), integrity (Matthew 5:27, James 5:12), boldness (Ephesians 6:18-20), devotion and piety (Deuteronomy 6:5), zeal (Revelations 3:19), God-centeredness (Isaiah 45:22), fortitude (2 Timothy 2:3), hope (Romans 8:24), modesty (Philippians 4:5), gratitude (Colossians 3:15), simplistic trust (Jeremiah 17:7), circumspection (Ephesians 5:15), etc. The songs that produces these in our lives are spiritual indeed. The songs that negates any among them or work against them in anyway is unspiritual and devilish.

It is not just to have negatives of Christian virtues such as lust that makes a song unspiritual but even that song that does not foster these virtues or the yearning for them, but rather diminishes them in us (while being supposedly neutral, i.e. not promoting vices itself) is still unspiritual. For example, a song may not encourage you to be promiscuous, but it makes you to be less zealous. A song may not encourage you to steal and may even shun it, but makes you to be less God-centred to become self-centred. Such songs are unspiritual and detrimental to our walk with God. All the negatives of these Christian virtue we can see in most secular songs. In many so called gospel songs also we can see them in a mild way. One virtue that so many so called gospel songs negate is that of a sober mind. A truly spiritual song must be completely void of these negatives and only produce and foster the fruit of the spirit and all other Christian virtue.

When the question of what defines spiritual song is raised, it is not that we cannot tell or at least have a hint of what spiritual song is in essence, but we may not yet define it with words. Definition in words is very important because this would be the guide to everyone willing to engage in the good practice of spiritual singing. It is just like I pointed out in my article titled "THE IMPORTANCE OF EXAMPLE TO LEARNING," that we may understand something as simple as "come," but may not be able to define it easily in words. The same case here, but the things people were writing in their articles about spiritual songs (such as psalms being inspired by the Holy Ghost and hymns not) just completely batters even the previous knowledge (though vague) we had about spiritual songs down to the ground. Even without careful consideration of the subject, such statements makes the Christian mind to laugh. But contrary to these people, listen to the words of someone who has understanding speak on the subject: Hezekiah Butterworth wrote in the introduction of his book titled, "The Story Of The Hymns And Tunes," saying, "It is natural to speak of hymns as 'poems,' indiscriminately, for they have the same structure. Imagination makes poems, devotion makes hymns... In short to be a hymn, what is written must express spiritual

feelings and desires. The music of faith, hope and charity will be somewhere in its strains." So the thing I'd like to pick in his words are these, "Imagination makes poems, devotion makes hymns." I'd also like to go ahead to add that creativity makes songs, revelation makes spiritual songs.

From both key verses above, we know that psalms, hymns and spiritual songs can be sung for ourselves to teach and admonish us. Speaking refers to everything that can be done through normal speech. So when it is written, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;" (Ephesians 5:19), we therefore know that all things done by speaking to the edification of the brethren can be done in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. We can also sing prayers to the Lord just as we sing praises and worship. However, all these must be done by the leading of the Holy Ghost.

This also brings to the fore the importance of understanding if a song is to be truly spiritual. For what is the essence of speaking if what is being spoken is not understood? So when we're told in Ephesians 5:19, "speaking to yourselves..." we know that understanding is key to spiritual songs. The psalmist also wrote, "For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding." (Psalm 47:7). This also should inform us that we must do everything possible to ensure that what is being song is understood by the singers and listeners. Whether this is by singing from a book, pamphlet, screen, etc. Ease of understanding is a key characteristic of spiritual songs.

Hymns is of necessity an inspiration of the Holy Ghost. The book of Hezekiah Buttrworth I quoted above titled, "The

Story Of The Hymns And Tunes," also speaks of how hymns were written and the tunes were composed. You can see the Holy Ghost's inspiration through all those stories.

Many writers got the wordings of their hymn by a direct revelation from God. Others, not by a direct revelation, but still by inspiration of the Holy Ghost through a life of deep devotion and piety. For example, listen to the history of the hymn, "My Faith Looks Up To Thee," by Ray Palmer:

Ray Palmer wrote these lyrics upon receiving a vision of Christ shortly after his graduation from Yale University, while working as a tutor at a New York school. However, he kept them to himself until meeting Lowell Mason on a street in Boston, Massachusetts. When Mason asked him to write something for a new hymnal, Palmer dug out his old notes and produced these lyrics, written two years earlier. After taking the lyrics home and reading them, Mason composed this tune. Several days later he saw Palmer again and said: "You may live many years and do many good things, but I think you will be best known to posterity as the author of My Faith Looks Up to Thee."It should be therefore well accepted that true hymns, whether by direct

revelation, gratitude for perceived good, inspiration in the study of the word, expressions of devotion and spiritual yearnings, etc. are all inspired by the Holy Ghost.

There are of course many hymns that are not written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Some are just a product of people being creative. Others are even by workings of devils. A good example of hymns that are not inspired by the Holy Ghost are those of Later Days Saints, and Romish hymns with Romish sentiments. So not everything that is sung like a hymn or psalm should be considered spiritual, but the spiritual man can discern them.

Lastly, the very tunes themselves must be that which edifies the spirit and produce or foster Christian virtues. It may be hard to understand why or if it were possible for mere tunes to do this. I cannot say how, but I know spiritual tunes themselves (without words) edifies the spirit and both produces and fosters Christian virtue. I heard a song in Igbo (a Nigerian language not mine), but though I knew not what was being said, yet in me, I felt this form of deep revival though I didn't have the slightest idea of the wordings. I also listened to Von Himmel Hoch as performed by AM Classica, and how wonderful it was to the spirit. It was so heavenly. Many other tunes on their own speak revival and Christian virtue into your life. Sometimes I think that such tunes are what would accompany a saints as he ascends to his eternal abode on high. How to know them is that they are good (even without any wordings) for devotional contemplation, meditation, communing with God, and they naturally tune your heart Heavenward. Also, listening to them produces and fosters the fruit of the spirit and other Christian virtue. A spiritual song must be sung to such tunes.

Though a spiritual song must be sung to such tunes, I don't know if it were right to sing to tunes of non Christian songs but tunes made in a rather Christian way. I like singing some hymns to the tune of Parting Glass. I know it is not a Christian song so to speak. All I know is that it is a traditional Irish song (though I saw a comment claiming it were Scottish. Can't say) but there are no real Christian convictions in the lyrics, yet singing Christian hymns to its tune seems powerful to me. Yet I cannot say if it were a wrong practice. Off course I don't mean that Christian songs should be sung in any way to clearly unchristian tunes or rhythm. I once saw on tv a "Christian" music video titled, "Find Me In The Church." This music took everything from the music of 50 Cent titled, "Find Me In The Club," and merely changed the wordings to have Christian sentiments. This is not what I'm talking about, but rather if it were good to sing Christian hymns to tunes that are fashioned after church styled music, as we ought to know that most composers of hymn tunes also had tunes to some rather secular themes.

I'd be happy if someone could give us, out of scripture and reason, a definite Yes or No to whether or not it were right to sing Christian hymns to such tunes. We may find other tunes like this which are good, but I do not encourage it or endorse such practices. We still need a clearer definite answer. So, do it at your own risk.

In the course of writing this article, I found the topic to be very interesting, and to be beyond what can be covered in few articles. For this reason, I'd make out time to compile a full book for a detailed discuss on the subject. I hope also that by the time I'm through with the book, I may have had a definite answer as to whether it were right or wrong to sing or even write Christian hymns to the tunes of church

styled, yet secular, music. But for now, this is how far I'd go.

Summary and Conclusion

"... We speak before God in Christ: but we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying."

(2 Corinthians 12:19)

"Let all things be done unto edifying."

(1 Corinthians 14:26)

- Spiritual songs are not entertainment songs with Christian sentiments.
- The church practice of today is inadequate to define spiritual songs.
- Spiritual songs must be characterised by the characteristics of hymns and psalms.
- MATHEMATICAL PROVE: If Psalm = Spiritual Song, Hymn = Spiritual song, and Psalm = Hymn, what is a spiritual song?
- Psalms and hymns are products of devotion, not imagination. So also all other spiritual songs must be products of devotion, not imagination.
- Psalms and hymns are a product of revelation, not creativity. So also must all other spiritual songs be products of revelation, and not creativity.
- Understanding is key
- The tunes must also be spiritual.

Some virtues that spiritual songs stir: soberness, contentment, purity, integrity, boldness, devotion and piety, zeal, God-centeredness, fortitude, hope, modesty, gratitude, simplistic trust, circumspection, the fruit of the spirit, etc.

Thank you very much for reading.

Prayer: *Lord Jesus Christ, we thank you very dearly for the gift of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. We thank you for taking the lead in singing hymns yourself to show us how you appreciate the gift of singing you gave us. Dear Lord, we ask today that you help us to do this most sacred practice of singing spiritual the very way you want it to. Help us to have deep reverence for you deep in our hearts as well as in all our deeds through obedience in Jesus' name. Amen.*

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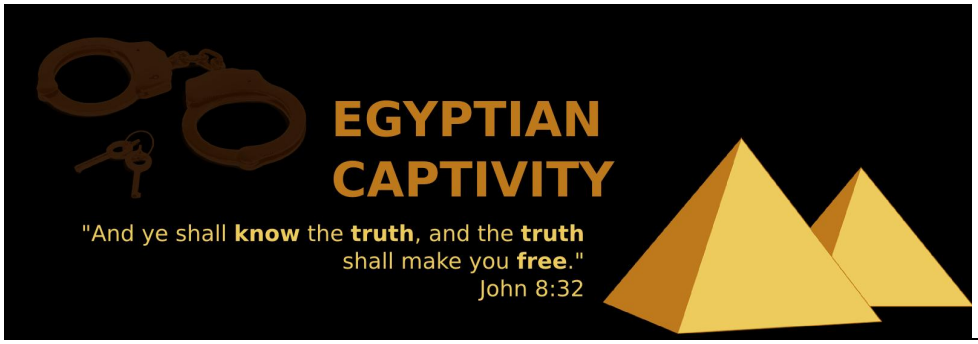
Photo of Ray Palmer gotten from Cyber Hymnal

EGYPTIAN CAPTIVITY

Posted on September 7, 2017



"...for we are not ignorant of his devices."

(2 Corinthians 2:11)

I began to read the book of Martin Luther titled "Babylonian Captivity" some time ago, but I stopped for I wasn't familiar with the terms used in the book. They seem too advanced for me at the time. I could read a number of paragraphs and not understand what exactly the great man was saying. I see a similarity between this title and the title of his book, but I don't wish to rewrite what he wrote for I'm yet to read the book. But seeing that there is a lot of similarities between the challenges of the church in every time and age, I'd not be surprised to see that there could be some similarities between what I'm writing here and what he wrote.

The reason for writing this article is to make us see clearly the hypocrisy of the current church leadership and their fabricated extortive church system which they always claim is from scriptures. I write to convince the church to see that we are not in the hands of our shepherds but in the hands of captors who have used us, our wealth, and platform to build massive empires for themselves the way the Egyptians used the Hebrews to build great cities and structures. It is a sad and bitter fact, but it is the truth.

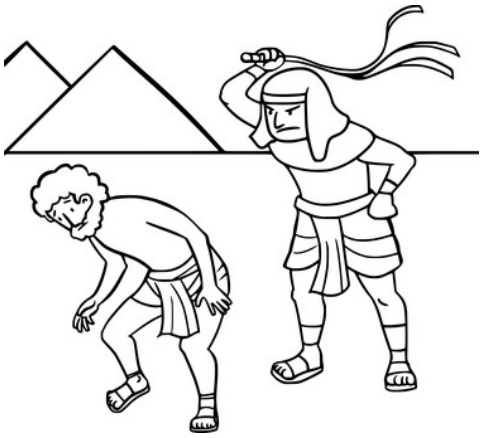
The Genesis Of The Egyptian Captivity

"Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: Come on, let us deal wisely with them..."

(Exodus 1:8 - 10)

The story of how the Egyptians were enslaved is one that is very pitiful to read. While the Bible just hinted on the scheme that was used saying they said, "let us deal with them wisely," informing us that they were cunning in their successful enslavement of the Israelites, the book of Jasher elaborated on how everything happened and there is a very important lesson for the church in it. The same cunning scheme with which the Jews we're enslaved is the same scheme the Devil is using on many church leaders today. Learning from the Israelites' experience would help us not to be ignorant of the devices of the Devil.

Now I would take the pains to warn you that I refer to the book of Jasher only because the Bible itself refers to it in two portions, that is in Joshua 10:13 and 2 Samuel 1:18. I do not wish that other books of creation or historical books of that kind should be read. Many of them are false and demonic. Please avoid them. I however encourage Christians to read the book of Jasher. You'd find it very useful.



So how it all happened, in summary, is that the Egyptians were scared of the Israelites for the Israelites were very powerful and strong. They felt very threatened by their presence in Egypt, yet for some reason they didn't want them to leave but limit them in number through hard and rigorous work. To effect this, they came up with a cunning scheme. They made a proclamation with Pharaoh's authority that they wanted to build defences in their vulnerable cities and that every worker would be greatly rewarded in wages. It was a very attractive offer and the Israelites joined in the work and worked with the Egyptians. Gradually the Egyptians began to withdraw one by one. While the Egyptians worked and during the times of their withdrawal everybody was well paid for their work. But when the Egyptians had fully withdrawn, they stopped paying the workers which were now only Jews and began to compel them to build by force. The withdrawal was so gradual that it took a year for them to fully withdraw. Now if you're a farmer, a year away from farm would have destroyed your reliance on your farming. If your were a herdsman, a year from tending your flock would also destroy your reliance on that. So by this scheme, they had made them completely reliant on the building construction they were doing. And that was how they became slaves of the Egyptians.If you read the detailed account as provided

by the Book of Jasher, your heart will bleed. The Hebrews were so oppressed that at a point, should they fail to meet up with the day's requirement in the number of bricks they were to produce, they would be forced to make up for it with their own children, using them as bricks. It is so heart rending to read about how a man would be forced by the necessity placed upon him to cement his own baby alive into the walls of the structure he's building for his captors. Very painful to read about.

The Levites however did not join in the building construction because they knew the offer was not sincere. For this reason, when the slavery started, they did not partake of it. It was the other tribes that took this offer that suffered dearly for their actions. Yes when it got to the time of killing Hebrew children, the Levites too partook of it, but not the slavery. This definitely was because they were not reliant on the Egyptians for their well being. Their self-reliance afforded them freedom in the midst of slavery.

How The Church Came Into The Same Form Of Bondage

"And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful."

(Mark 4:19)

Now how is this scheme used today? It mostly is used on preachers. Preachers like the Israelites in Egypt consider earning a living from preaching a blessing. When it was introduced into the church, it probably seemed to them like an open door to greater service. But this was a crafty

dealing of the Devil. Now they're called to depend on the church for the source of their livelihood. Who is responsible for paying them? The church authorities (church owners and founders). Now tell me, if that church authority (church owners and founders) says they must preach what is contrary to scriptures, won't they do it? They've got no choice but to do it. Should they even love the church as a man loves his own child, still for the necessity placed on them, they'd still use that child as a brick in building the empires of these slave masters.

Don't blame your pastors. Rather pray for them to repent and return to Christ. While some are outrightly messengers of the Devil to bring to fruition his evil schemes, some were actually sincere. They didn't think that things would turn out the way it has eventually turned out. They really thought they were up to a whole lot of good. They really thought that by accepting to be paid for preaching, the Devil was in trouble, as they would be able to dedicate more time in boxing his ugly head. Little did they know that in their accepting such wages, the Devil was himself jubilating that they were the ones in his trouble.

I used to be very angry at pastors for taking part in such an evil enterprise that slowly and steadily drains the church of life, strength, and vitality, until I considered these things. I am a Sunday School teacher in my local church and I also handle Bible study for teenagers. I can assure you that if you really love to serve in such capacity and care for spiritual things, the necessity to work for a living so as to put aside these things for a while would seem burdensome to you. Now imagine someone offering to take this burden from you. You no longer have to care for the things of this world. You no longer have to put aside the study of the word, preparing for your lessons, etc. to go work for money. I bet you'd think this is such a wonderful offer, just the way

the Hebrews saw the Egyptian offer to be a wonderful one. In the end, it turned out a trap just as it turned out a trap for pastors and consequently for the church. Rather than building the church, pastors are forced to tear it down with lies, and extort the poor sheep to build these empires for their masters.

Now it is obvious that profit is at the top agenda of modern church leadership which consists of church owners and stakeholders. Anything that threatens the profitability of church business would be frowned at. If the truth is driving people away, thereby reducing the profitability of church business, won't they compromise the truth to keep their members? If a pastor in such a system decides to take his stand uncompromisingly on the truth of scriptures, shall he not be taking a firm stand on a roller coaster that'll throw him backwards into poverty? By embracing this system of commercial preaching, and having been this way over a period of time, they have enslaved themselves into a position between severe poverty and compromise, for they are totally reliant on them like the Israelites became reliant on the Egyptians.

The pressure to compromise has been wittingly heated up by the Devil. While it was possible to still have some who would be willing to take their stance for absolute truth in such a system, the Devil introduced his apostles to start their churches nearby (doctrine wise) to draw members away from churches that stood firmly on the truth. These new generation churches present a gospel that is so diluted yet falsely promising salvation to its members. It is so close to the true gospel having many things in common with it that you can't even tell the difference. People who therefore leave to these churches don't even feel like they're leaving the way of truth. By this, there is no more constraint on anybody to remain in a church that would maintain the true

gospel of Christ. While people would never leave the church to join a satanic cult because of the constraint of the knowledge of its dire eternal consequences, but to take this decision to leave a vibrant church doesn't place any feeling of constraint at all on the members. For this reason, to maintain a firm stance on the truth is to lose your members to these churches with a 100% guarantee that nothing would keep them. So the church began (of necessity) to compromise to the foolish standards of these new generation churches to keep their members. Now if you won't play along, you'd certainly (most certainly) lose out.

Now, let it not seem that when preachers begin to compromise their stance, it seems to them too that they are denying the Lord Jesus Christ. Far be it from them. They could never consciously do such. However, the necessity they find themselves in would work in their subconscious to persuade them that they're just coming to a newer truth.

This is what is responsible for many things we see in today's church. Our mode of dressing, the way our liturgies go, our style of music, our doctrines, are increasingly reflecting the world and vanities rather than Jesus, his word, and his cross. Look at women speaking, teaching, and singing in the church. This does not reflect the Bible, it reflects feminism, a demonic movement of the world. We see endless teachings about how to make money from the very pulpit that should help the Christian take his eyes from the things of this world and have them focused on God. Wealth is good and can be useful for our walk in this world, but why, I mean why, should how to make money be taught in the church so extensively? These are just few cases of how we shamelessly reflect the world instead of God. Accepting the practice of commercial preaching placed pastors in a very bad shape that made them

completely unable to withstand the onslaught of the kingdom of darkness. They just couldn't do anything about it than watch it happen. It's a shame what we're going through. It's a shame what we've come to. Our captivity place us in the mire of shame.

Let it be known that as the Egyptians built great cities by using their captives so also these false prophets, false apostles, and false Christs, by using the church, have built massive empires for themselves.

Deweaponisation

"They all hold swords, being expert in war: every man hath his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night."

(Song of Solomon 3:8)

While in many countries security is easily maintained by Governmental law enforcement agencies by depriving

people from owning arms, I suppose that everyone ought to be armed for self defence. This should also be looked into because ability to defend yourself with adequate arms also help boost security (just my opinion). I believe that being deprived of arms produces victims. Abraham and his servants were armed enough to go to war with kings. Were they unarmed like is the case today, how could they ever go on such a venture to rescue poor Lot? The innocent man would have died or be taken into a perpetual captivity. Just as we can see in Song of Solomon 3:8, every man ought to be armed and trained in arms for self defence.While it can be good for security, deweaponisation is a strategy to keep captives from being able to resist their oppressors. It has been the nature of conquerors that the moment they conquer people, to deprive them from being able to own arms. This happened to the Jews under the Roman empire's domination of their territory. Sometimes it is also used to tame dangerous people. Depriving people of arms is most commonly a strategy used by captors, and this form of disarming captives and making them vulnerable is also in full force in the church of today.

When under a strong military dominance that guarantees security, not owning arms or having to learn how to use it feels good, especially to the lazy minded. "Let them possess the arms to protect me" they'd think to themselves. And seeing the deweaponisation going on in the church, lazy Christians also love to have it so. Let the pastors read the Bible and then come tell us what God means to say.

Deweaponisation in the present captivity of the church is achieved in claiming that you cannot understand scriptures on your own. You need the elites (those who know, Greek, Aramaic, Hebrew, etc.). For these reasons, people tend to leave study of the word of God to their elites failing to arm themselves with God's word. For indeed the Bible describes

itself as the sword of the Spirit and the weapon of our warfare (Ephesians 6:17, Hebrews 4:12). To read and understand it is to arm yourself with it. To live by it is to use it. But when people claim you cannot understand scriptures except with the help of elites, and make you believe so, they have disarmed you. You can't use the Bible for yourself.

Today, though some may claim they read their Bible regularly, but what is the benefit of all you're reading if you feel you're not even understanding it except your elites give you explanations? This concept that you cannot understand scriptures independently also causes, subconsciously, an unwillingness in people to read the Bible for themselves. This disarms the Christian, and leaves him at the mercy of his captors who can then interpret the Bible any which way they wished. It is what they tell you from their knowledge of Greek, Aramaic, etc., that you accept. They therefore give you your orders and not the Bible.

This is how the captured church is craftily disarmed. But I plead, do not let go of your sword o Christian soldier. Do not think that you need elites to understand your Bible. Reading your Bible is your primary responsibility and understanding it is your birthright being a child of God having his indwelling spirit in you. Don't leave reading your Bible for another to do. Then shall you be armed indeed. What ever measures the world may take for security's sake, I assure you that it is God's will for you to be armed (Ephesians 6:11-18). The spiritual deweaponisation of Christians is to prevent us from standing against the wiles of Devil. Don't be a victim. Don't be a captive. Be a victor.

The Way Out

"If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

(John 8:31 - 32)

I always maintain that the genesis of our problems always emanate from every point we choose to go out of God's will. Jesus has spoken to us, and had we followed his instructions we could never come into such a state of captivity. Jesus said, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:31 - 32). There in is where we got it all wrong, and if we must be free, we must return to his word and begin to seek the truth. We have been brought to a state of captivity because lies were sold to us. The lies were incredibly successful in bringing us into captivity because we sought not for the truth and cared little about it. We just want to come to church and have someone else come and tell us the "truth" he has found out rather than seeking this truth each one for himself and sharing it one with another for edification. Therefore lies has prospered in our midst. It is only by lies that these captors could hold the church captive, and it is obvious therefore that only by the truth can we be made free.

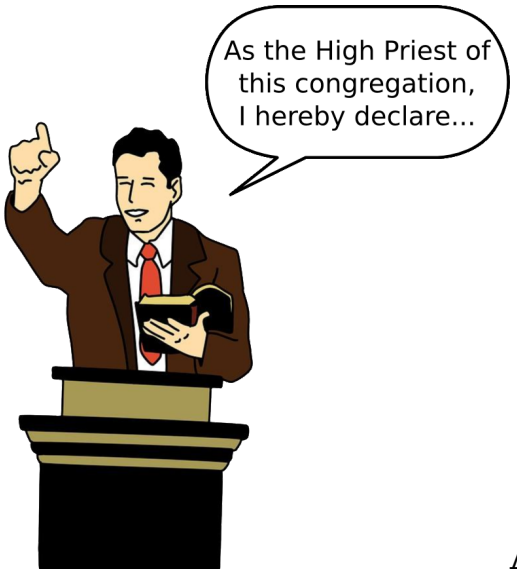
I shall just mention a few lies that has been sold to us and how it has enslaved us. I shall also tell us of how the truth can so easily set us free from them.

DEWEAPONISATION: I've spoken about this already above, and needn't return fully into it. We saw the lies that we don't need those elites who understand foreign language to understand or interpret scriptures for us. In

accepting the person of these elites is going against the truth which says, "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ." (1 Corinthians 2:10 - 16).

So we see clearly that the spirit of God is he who gives us wisdom not elites. We all have the spirit of God, therefore there is no reason to go after elites for understanding (except we are not saved at all in the first place). The elites are completely unable to show us the mind of God by knowledge of Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic, etc. If any man may profit you, he must have the spirit of God. But you too must know that if you're truly saved, you equally have his spirit too. Only God's spirit can show us God's mind. No scholar or theologian can understand him. They who ever understood God all had/have his in dwelling spirit. So let us rather draw close to our Bible (King James Bible) and true reverential study for yourselves, and spend time in prayer to God, asking him to teach us and open our understanding. If you have the spirit of God, you don't need anyone to interpret scriptures for you.

So the knowledge of this simple truth that the spirit of God teaches us himself crushes their whole deweaponisation scheme. The knowledge of this truth sets you free from their deweaponisation scheme.



PASTORAL PRIESTHOOD: The second lie we are sold is the lie that pastors are our priests. But you need to know that in the New Testament there are only two forms of priesthood, which are, The High Priest, which is Jesus, and Jesus alone, and next is the Royal Priesthood, which includes every born again Christian. There is no pastoral priesthood. No ecclesiastical priesthood. No clerical priesthood. We have only two. Hebrews 5:4 tells us that no man take the honour of becoming a High Priest (and consequently any form of priesthood to God) upon himself. Even Jesus Christ did not appoint himself our High Priest but God ordained him saying, "... Thou art a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek...." (Hebrews 5;5). We cannot of ourselves appoint priests or draw criteria for priesthood to God (whether it be graduation from seminary, etc.). If God does not bestow this honour we can't take the honour. We can't appoint priests to God contrary to his will, but we can appoint priests to devils for sure. If a priesthood must be valid, it must be approved in scriptures. We can't just fabricate priesthoods for ourselves like Jeroboam did (1 Kings 13:33-34). The priesthood that is not recognised by the Bible cannot be a priesthood unto God but of the high places.

This little truth also brings to the ground all their claims to be your priests as if they were anything important that you can't do without. Many of their extortive doctrines are founded on this lie that they are priests. Don't be deceived, your priesthood (Royal Priesthood) is scripturally recognised, but theirs (pastoral, ecclesiastical, or clerical priesthood) is not recognised by scriptures.

EXTORTIVE GIVING: This follows easily after abolishing false pastoral, ecclesiastical, or clerical priesthood. Seeing they're not our priests, what right do they have to the tithes of Christians? Out of greed, the leadership (Christian captors) claim that to fail to give them 10% of your money is to rob God. By this lie they have drained the wealth of the church. They didn't further the gospel for never had paganism, moral decadence, and other vices been more prevalent. They're going rich but the church is growing weak.

There are many other extortive doctrines with which they rob and spoil the church. Doctrines such as first fruits, seed sowing, violent offering (giving all you have at the moment) first born offering, and the list goes on and on. But Jesus told us clearly that he that would serve him in this later days must do so at his own expense. Please read Matthew 10:5-10 and Luke 22:35-36, study it carefully comparing the two passages to see the difference between the ministry of the time when Jesus was on earth (Matthew 10:5-10) to the ministry to the Gentiles (Luke 22:35). Then try to understand what Jesus says about New Testament ministerial services. Anyone who claims that God is calling him to service must prepare to fund himself. Though the work man is ever worthy of his wages, Jesus requires us to take our purse, scrip, etc. and provide for ourselves. This is what guided the apostles all their days. All of them including Paul. Read Acts 20:33-35 for confirmation of this.

It was Paul speaking there to the Ephesians church elders. I'll find time (God willing) to write an article on how Christian ministry ought to be funded. Please watch out for it, but in summary the watch phrase is "fund your own ministry."

Knowing this truth, you ought to stop funding church division and weakness by paying tithes, first fruits, and other extortive giving. This may even include offerings. I tell you the truth, it is such money that divides the church. Take away this money and church founders would go find something better to do than selling lies. What you owe God is service not money (Romans 12:1). John Wycliffe, in Divine Dominion, written by him, explained that you don't rob God in refusing to pay tithes and other forms of giving promoted by extortioners, you rob God when you deny him your service. He went on to explain that because we refuse to serve God, he sends on our way cankerworms, palmerworms, etc. who destroy our increase in persons of what we'd call today, Pastors (and other church leaders and founders). I found this to be 101% true. If everyone had actively been involved in rendering services to God as they carry out their earthly responsibilities, no body would be able to convince you that services to God in whatever capacity is the reason why they can't work for a living. So because we fail to serve God, these church leaders come to destroy our increase. Therefore, begin rather to use your own money to serve God the best way YOU can. Actively serve God with your own money.

If we would do this, it would set us free. Among all the others, the most detrimental aspect of our captivity is the funding we provide for the continuance of our captivity. If we would know the truth that we don't owe these our captors a dime, they would starve to death or, like I said before, they'd go look for something better doing than

selling lies. What ever you wish to die, starve it, and it will naturally die. Our captors know this and that is why they fight hard to convince the church that the greatest sin is failure to pay tithes, first fruits, etc. They craftily equate it to robbing God by misapplying scriptures.

These are just few of the lies with which the church has been brought to captivity. The list goes on and on. Please read my article titled "TITHES" to understand better why it is not Biblical to practice it in the New Testament church.

Read the Bible (King James Bible) for yourself and find out more. But knowing the truth, we must begin to act right. Refuse to rely on elites for interpretation of scriptures. Remember you're a priest yourself and let no one claim to be a priest that is not recognised in the Bible to you. Stop funding these captors of the church. Why should a captive fund his captors and that willingly? No, it must stop. To stop these things and to begin to act rightly, we need to be bold. For indeed there's nothing to fear. A liar is weak in his stance as a feather. A little breathe of truth will blow him away. For this reason, fear not. Be strong and do it.

God Shall See To Our Freedom

"For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out."

(Ezekiel 34:11)

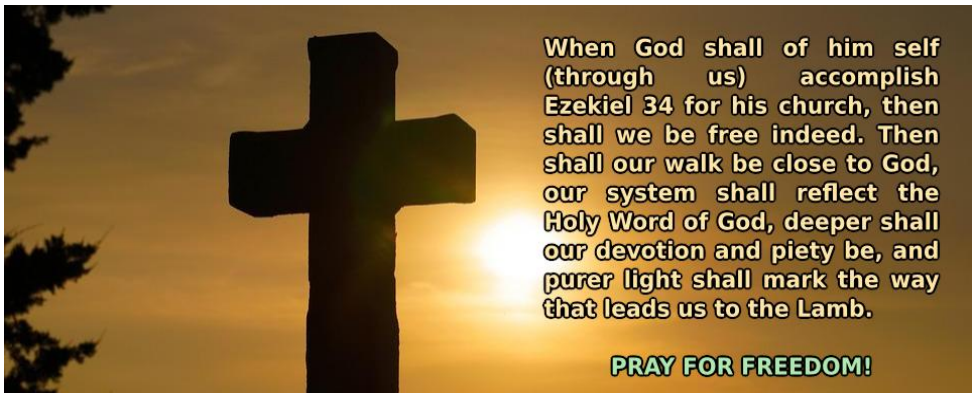
Now about the certainty as to whether or not our redemption is sure, we have a sure guarantee for God has spoken. Whether men like it or not, and whether we cooperate with him or not, the redemption of the righteous will be effected by the power of no other than God himself.

For read below in detail what he says about our situation and to the shepherds turned captors:

"Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. And they were scattered, because there is no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered. My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill:yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them. Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of the Lord; As I live, saith the Lord God, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock; Therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the Lord; Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them. For thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel

by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country." (Ezekiel 32:3-13).

Please read the whole of the thirty second chapter of Ezekiel and see what God shall himself do. In the day when God shall accomplish this for his church, then shall we be free indeed and purity and truehearted devotion towards God shall reign in our midst.


When God shall of him self (through us) accomplish Ezekiel 34 for his church, then shall we be free indeed. Then shall our walk be close to God, our system shall reflect the Holy Word of God, deeper shall our devotion and piety be, and purer light shall mark the way that leads us to the Lamb.
PRAY FOR FREEDOM!

Let us not sit back saying let God do it, rather, let us prayerfully seek the truth for ourselves, and, when we realise the truth, act with complete boldness for the redemption of the church, knowing that God himself is in our midst to accomplish this great redemptive enterprise. As we do so, may God open our understanding to know the truth, stand for the truth, and cheer our hearts as we fight manfully for the truth which will of necessity set us free.

Thank you for reading. God bless you.

Prayer: *Thank you dear Father for all you've allowed to come upon your church. We may not tell why it is so, but we are glad that by this captivity we shall see your mighty power at work as you set your church free by your own self and power. We are sorry for our collective carelessness that*

brought us to such a sorry state. Please forgive us. We pray that as you have said in Ezekiel 34, you will redeem us to the uttermost. Thank you dear Father for in Jesus' dear name we pray. Amen.

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BUSINESS, SPIRITUALITY, AND MINISTRY

Posted on Oct 6, 2017

"Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord."

(Romans 12:11)

This article is in furtherance of what I wrote about in my previously published article titled, "**EGYPTIAN CAPTIVITY**." In it I sought to show how the church has been lured into a state of captivity as the Egyptians lured the Israelites into a state of captivity. I looked briefly back into recent history to see what has transpired down the years that resulted in this captivity and to see how that church leaders in many climes have used the church, its platform, and wealth, to build massive empires of wealth for themselves the way the Egyptians used the Israelites to build great cities and structures for themselves. Lastly I pointed on the way out of such a captivity, and I assure you, it's so easy. Key to coming out of this captivity is knowing the truth which Jesus says shall make us free. (John 8:32)

In furtherance of explaining the truth that shall set us free, and having pointed out the wrong things people do in the name of funding their Christian ministry in that article, and also to serve as a guide to people wishing to embark on

Christian ministry, I wish here to explain the right way a ministry is to be funded.

No Church Pet-ism

"I have coveted no man’s silver, or gold, or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."

(Acts 20:33 - 35)

First, there is no such calling as leaving all that is yours to survive at the expense of others. It may seem that there is such a calling when we consider the calling of the apostles, how they left all that is theirs to follow Christ (which we all must do with the right understanding of it). If there's such a calling to let go of working and have others feed you, it certainly won't be a call to Christian ministry, but a call to Church pet-ism. Those won't be ministers but pets. There's no ministry like this in scriptures.

We see in Acts 20:33-35 that Paul and his companions didn't live as pets. They worked for their living. And said to the elders (church leaders of highest rank) that this was the example

they too should follow. Read those verses again and see how they are diametrically opposed to the way Christian "leaders" are going about there ministry today. Nothing in the Bible suggests that the church should have pets and call them leaders.

I know there are many portions of scriptures that seem to suggest that it is okay to earn a living from preaching the gospel, but I'll explain how they don't in any way in another article that shall focus on Christian giving. Please watch out for it. But I ought to point out in summary of what I'll be sharing in that article that Christians give to the needy (to cater for a specific need) and not for wages.

Business and Spirituality

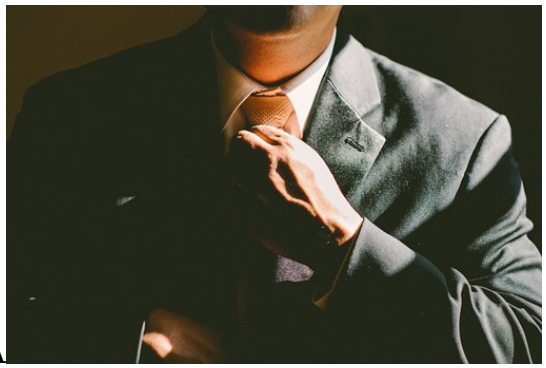
"Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord."

(Romans 12:11)

"And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing."

(1 Thessalonians 4:11 - 12)

Now, it is worthy of note that we have a clear Christian call to be good business and career people. Being a good business person is a holy Christian calling. Far holier than the un-Christian and unscriptural call to commercial preaching. I know your pastors won't like it, but the definition of pastor in today's church is a commercial preacher. I don't see any thing of that nature in scriptures.



A good business life is a core aspect of Christian spirituality. Romans 12:11 admonishes us that we ought to be diligent in our business. Failure to do this is to flout God's commandment (whether or not you fail to do so under the pretext of ministry). This is to tell you how business and career is to the Christian life. Paul was a tent maker, so was Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18:1-3). Luke was a physician (Colossians 4:14). Since the Bible was not a book of people's career, we may not find much about the profession of others, but we have enough to know that apostles earned their own living, for at least we know they did not live at the expense of the church.

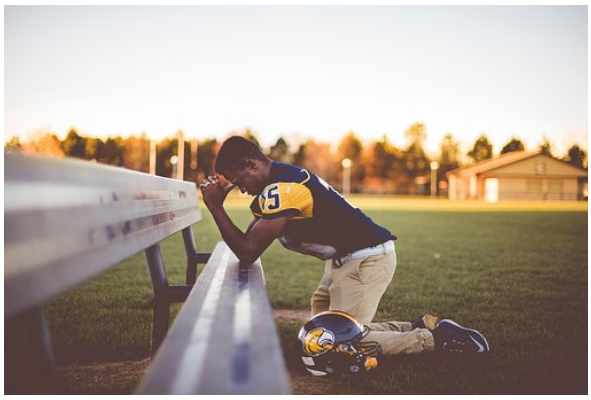
The Bible says, "And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing." (1 Thessalonians 4:11 - 12). So working is the way by which we ought to provide for ourselves that we may lack nothing, not ministry.

Therefore your business and career life is an integral part of your Christian calling. It is the legitimate source of finance for your necessary Christian ministry. Get a job, start a business, or learn a trade, be studious about your trade, be diligent and hardworking, then serve God for free. This is true Christian spirituality.

Ministry

"Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."

(Acts 20:34 - 35)



Now as you fulfil the holy calling of being good business people and career people, from the profit of that calling, you fund your ministry. This is an act of sacrifice that is well acceptable to God. This is the way to go about Christian ministry. Our diligently engaging in a profitable business and serving God for free is an act of benevolence towards God and his kingdom. A rare privilege. We all should do it so proudly.Every Christian ought to be an earner of income and every Christian ought to simultaneously have a ministry. Ministry should not be seen as something for church leadership only or those with the so called clerical calling. The Bible says, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we

be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." (1 Corinthians 12:12 - 13). Notice the emphasis on ALL. For this reason, if you know that Jesus died for you, and know that you've been redeemed by his blood and baptised, then you must have a Christian ministry you're actively engaged in. For you're part of his body and of necessity have a function. No part of a body is without its functions. Even the nails we trim off from time to time have their functions. You therefore have a ministry to perform no matter your career, schedules, or whatever, you have a calling you must actively make time to perform. It is in doing this reasonable service to him that you, as a priest, redeemed by his blood, offer yourself as a living sacrifice. (Romans 12:1).

In confirmation of this, Jesus also says in Mark 13:34, "For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch." In that he says, "to every man his work," we know that there's no passive role for a baptised and born again Christian. Each and everyone of us has been given a duty which we must perform. Failure to do so is to rob him.

Now, ministry has nothing to do with drawing away disciples after you in the name of starting a church. Not even if you claim that the foundation of that church is Christ, for Christ is the one foundation of his one church (his one body). Starting a church is not starting a Christian ministry, for starting a church is nothing but concision (cutting off from the body of Christ), and it takes nothing other than a devil-counterfeit to embark on the evil ministry of concision. Christian ministry is solely for the purpose of building up, edifying, and perfecting the body of Christ. So we must have one church with many ministries perfecting that one body, for the Bible says, "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." (Ephesians 4:11 - 12). This is the essence of Christian ministry. So, remain in that one church and build up its members, (though we have many churches at the moment which we must strive to unify the willing amongst them and pull down the rest so as to unify the body of Christ into one).The types of ministry we have spelt out in the Bible are these,

- apostles
- prophets
- evangelists
- pastors
- teachers

The gifts of the spirit as enumerated in the twelfth chapter of 1st Corinthians can also inform us on other types of ministry that a Christian can be involved in. Christian ministry is not restricted to anything but the leading of the spirit and must be pursued with the sole aim of furthering the Kingdom of God and doing what we can to ensure that his will be done in earth as in heaven. For this reason we have a wide range of ministry that Christians should be engaged in of which much if them are yet unexplored, especially seeing the blessing of the Internet and social media. We must let the love of God and humanity, and moral and spiritual well-being of the society drive us to serve God and humanity. Let us have an earnest yearning for service like Charles Wesley did, a yearning which he expressed in one of his hymns. The hymn goes,

“Jesus, confirm my heart's desire
to work and speak and think for thee;
still let me guard the holy fire,
and still stir up thy gift in me.

"Ready for all thy perfect will,
my acts of faith and love repeat,
till death thy endless mercies seal,
and make my sacrifice complete.”

If this shall be our desire, we shall see a world of things to be done for Jesus' sake. Whether it is by writing, singing, preaching, teaching, activism, evangelism over the social media, and so on, we must see enough to be fully engaged

in the work of ministry. [In contemplating this issue of service, I recommend the hymn titled, "Lord, You Give The Great Commission," by Jeffery William Rowthorn. Lyrics and music tune can be found HERE.] And when we have discovered that which we could do for Jesus' dear sake, let us do it according to the pattern he had laid down for us. **"Freely you have received, freely give."** (Matthew 10:8)

When Jesus first sent out his apostles, he told them not to take with them anything meant to supply their needs. But when Jesus was instructing them on how to go about the ministry of the word in his absence, the Bible says, "And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing. Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip." (Luke 22:35 - 36). So you see that Jesus did not ordain this office of leaving everything and then getting them back by living at the expense of others. He didn't ordain this practise of hiding away in a monastery or parsonage claiming to be lifting carnal burdens off the shoulder and placing it on that of another in order to serve God better. Paul left all that he had but as it says in Acts 20:33 - 35, yet he provided for himself and says this is how we too ought to serve. Jesus, in Luke 22:35 - 36, was clearly saying in essence, "provide for yourselves, fund your own ministry, and don't rely on others."

Service to God should not hinder anyone from working. The Bible is clear that

anybody who does not work should also not eat. "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat." (2 Thessalonians 3:10). If the preachers who don't want to work can survive without eating, then let them continue not to work. Now, those who are into church business would wish to call preaching a form of work also and thereby justify it as a trade. But in this passage, the Bible refers to industry and not just anything that takes your time. So preaching is not a form of work by which we may make a living with.

The Poison Of Ecclesiastical Wealth

"And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted."

(1 Corinthians 10:4 - 6)

When Lord Cobham in 1413, who in those days along with the Lolards withstood Romish doctrines in the church of England, was questioned, he said something of profound truth. Before Archbishop Arundel, Concerning the popish church and the Pope, Lord Cobham denounced the wealth of the church as venom . Archbishop Arundel asked him, "What do you mean by venom?" He said, "Your possessions and lordships."

Truly wealth in the hand of the ministers of the Gosple is poison. It kills them or makes them weak so that when the Devil embarks on his onslaught against the church, pushing, with all his vices, for compromise, they just won't be able to stand being badly poisoned by money. That man said that not knowing how true it would be proven in our days. It is just natural that when your source of livelihood is threatened you'd do almost anything to secure it. When you make the preaching of the gospel your livelihood and, due to some circumstance orchestrated by the Devil, sticking uncompromisingly to the truth threatens that livelihood, would a man not put aside the truth to maintain his livelihood?

I have worked as a Sunday School teacher and taught some Bible Study classes, but I don't make a living from it. I know with what confidence I speak against what is evil and I know how fearless I am when I do so. The worst they can do is to stop coming to my class which isn't horrible. Those who love the truth shall remain and life goes on. Should every student leave my class, life still goes on. If I were a father, that wouldn't cause my family to go into lack. That wouldn't cause my kids to be sent out of school. That wouldn't make my Landlord to kick us out of the house. The consequences of their actions can only be on their head not mine.

However, now imagine if, by my preaching the truth, their leaving my class meant that my family suffers lack, my kids get sent out of

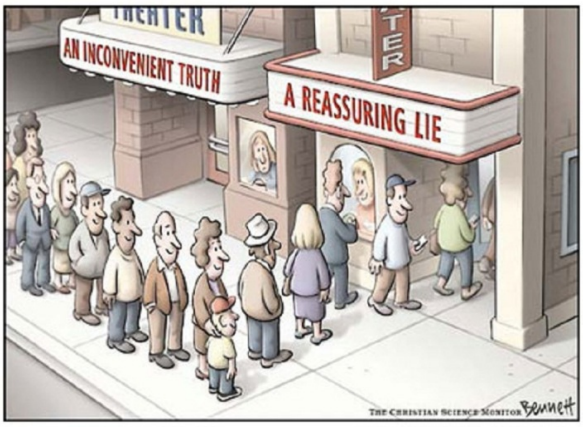
school, I and my family gets kicked out of the house by our landlord, just to name a few. And imagine if preaching what they like would keep them to avert this. I tell you the truth, I must be a wicked father to preach the truth and not what people like to hear. Everyone wants to be the best dad and should be the best dad in the world. It would be morally wrong, scripturally speaking, for me to stick to the truth in such a case. It would be okay for me to allow such losses on myself. But it is completely different to allow my family go through this. While it is okay for me to allow poverty upon myself to stick to the truth, it would be wickedness to allow my family to go through it. So if I earn my living from preaching, I should understand also that I must do all I can to maintain its profitability. Failure to do this is both morally and scripturally wrong.

Do you wonder why it is morally and scripturally wrong? Here, "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." (1 Timothy 5:8). So you see. When you make preaching a source of livelihood, you put yourself under a pressure which you can't stand under. In such a case, you'd often be placed between two evil and exclusive options. The one, less wicked, is to stick to the truth, and the other, more wicked, is allow your family go through lack and poverty.

Jesus performed his ministry in total freedom because he didn't rely on his followers for sustenance. If they were providing for him, it won't have bothered him so little when they all left in John 6:66. He, as a matter of fact, certainly wanted them to leave. The way he presented his points to them was clearly to irritate them. Yet he achieved what he want with little or no worry about his sustenance. But when

we, contrary to this, begin to make a living from those we preach to, how can we freely tell the truth to them?

This is why it is a poison. You can't make preaching your source of livelihood and be in a good shape to wrestle with the Devil. Either you join him or you die of poverty.



You may say, "but you cannot lose members by sticking to the truth if they're truly Christians." Yes and granted, but all churches need to be rebuked from time to time for we are still in the flesh. Of all the seven churches in the book of Revelations, only one was without rebuke. Apart from this, the Christian doctrine of self-denial is also repulsive to the natural man. For this reason, there's not a time, no matter how holy the dispensation is, that you don't stand a risk of losing members for preaching the truth as it is. This is most especially the case today. Please read my previous article, "**EGYPTIAN CAPTIVITY**," to see the scheme with which the Devil is stealing members from churches that seek to stick to the truth. If we must fight a good fight for the church and against compromise, we must never allow ourselves to earn a living from ministry, but we must do our ministry sacrificially of our own substance.

Let us be wise and begin to pray that this bad system of the present day church cease and God restore truth to us. Let

us ourselves seek the truth, and may the God of truth reveal his truth to us and establish his truth in us by his mercy. Amen.

Thank you for reading. God bless you.

Prayer: *Dear Father, thank you for giving us this rare privilege to be able to serve you in this capacity of being good business and career people and, by the provision you bring our way through this, we minister to you of our own substance. Dear Lord, we pray that you will help the church to stop this bad system of poisoning our leaders with money. Help those who love this money poison repent of their ways. Help us to experience revival and sincerity in our service to you in Jesus' name. Amen.*

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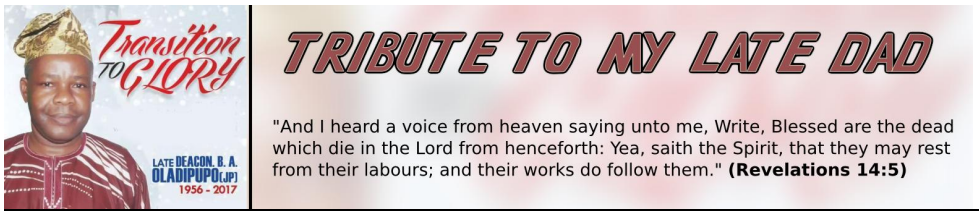
TRIBUTE TO MY LATE DAD

Posted on November 18, 2017


Transition TO GLORY
LATE DEACON, B. A. OLADIPUPO (JP)
1956 - 2017
TRIBUTE TO MY LATE DAD
"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." (Revelations 14:5)

"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."

(Revelation 14:13)

It was on the 22nd of October, 2017, that my dad passed on. He passed on very early in the morning, so early that I'm sure he wasn't late for Sunday worship service, ABOVE. He probably left in a haste for that purpose. He's in a great company now.

While it would be very wrong to paint an angel of a man, it would amount to robbery to deny any man the praises due him, and my dad was a man of wondrous merits worthy of much praise.

Firstly, throughout my life, God, through his favour upon my dad, supplied our needs, provided security, sustenance, shelter, education, etc. and most importantly, the teachings in the ways of the Lord. I for this reason agree so much to the old saying that goes, “To God, to parents, and to

teachers we can never render sufficient gratitude and compensation.”

My dad was hugely successful in civil service by hard work and honesty. He believed so much in hard work that he found so much fault with the saying that goes, "all works and no play makes Jack a dull boy."

Not many dads are as well travelled as mine. God, by his favour, took my dad to places he never thought he would ever go to in his life. And he accomplished much for himself, his family, and many others to.

Finally my dad was a man of strong Christian convictions, good personal devotional life, and a man of prayer. His prayer life was very instrumental to my conversion. On the 31st of December, 2004, as was the custom, we had a crossover service, which was an all night service so that we entered the new year fellowshiping together. In that service I sat on a pew behind my dad. After we did the count down to the new year, people were excited going from person to person and saying "happy new year!" The excitement was much and as I turned to say "Happy new year" to my dad I found him on his knees praying. Seeing him on his knees praying, the thought came to me, "why don't you also pray." And that night (or morning) I went on my knees and prayed inviting Jesus into my life and pleading with God to help me not to go to Hell, for that was the fear that filled my heart in those days. As also was the custom, when the day broke, we gathered again to worship. While the preacher was preaching, I saw a trance, not that I was sleeping, I was fully conscious of the sermon while I saw the trance. In the trance, I saw my self sitting on the ground in a dark room with my arms wound around my leg and my head on my knees, then all of a sudden like a door was opened and a bright light shone into the room, and I stood up and walked

towards the light. Since that time my life never remained the same. Not that life became easy as some people would like to persuade people to believe that when you become born again, that is the end of pain and any unpleasantness. But I lost many friends, opportunities, and other things, but I found in Christ far much more than I ever lost so much that I can confidently say, let the whole world go if it will, I lose nothing if Christ shall be mine. This rich experience of conversion was inspired by my praying dad.

How differently I see death now. I've only read about its pains in the past but I now feel the awful pain in reality. Death is wicked and cruel. Yet how much more differently I now see and understand the greatness of the efficacy of the death of Christ upon the cross for our salvation. How the most wicked thing in life is changed into a beautiful passage to eternal blessedness. The thought of these things so fills my heart these days. It is a wonder to ponder.

It is for times such as this when life turns its ugliest side on us that we need (NOW) to accept Christ, who is able to make all things including death beautiful in its time, as our Lord and Saviour. "... Our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." (2 Timothy 1:10). Only in Jesus is this salvation found.

I therefore implore friends, well wishers, loved ones, etc. of my dad not to mourn but rejoice greatly. Not because my dad is departed from us, but rejoice for him because he's gone to be with the Lord. Indeed, his departure was so painful and heart rending beyond what I could possibly describe, but nothing consoles me than the confidence I have that he has gone to be with the Lord. We shall meet again with hearts of joy by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. For this reason, I now rejoice and do not mourn.

The Bible agrees to this when it says, "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope." (1 Thessalonians 4:13). These are not days of sorrow but days of great celebration, and let us celebrate accordingly with much praise and gratitude to God our Saviour.

Thank you and God bless you.

CHRISTIAN GIVING

Posted on December 11, 2017

"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again."

(Luke 6:38)

In my two previous articles, **EGYPTIAN CAPTIVITY**, and **BUSINESS, SPIRITUALITY, AND MINISTRY**, I wrote on things relating to abuses in the church. I also said that the way we can come out of the captivity we are in is to know the truth. Why people get so easily extorted by their "Christian leaders" is because they don't even know what the Bible commands a Christian about giving. If we knew what the Bible commands us in respect to giving, their be little success in the extortive schemes of such "leaders."
I covered ministerial funding in the past article on **BUSINESS, SPIRITUALITY, AND MINISTRY**, explaining that we ought to be good business and career people and fund our own ministries ourselves. This does not mean that there are no occasions when we don't need to give. And I plead that this articles should not be seen as directed to making us as Christians become unwilling to give. All that I seek to do is stop abuses and extortion in the church. We must still give with the right understanding of it. Forwardness in giving is a Christian virtue.

With this in mind, I wish to explain what the Bible teaches us about giving that we may give according to God's will when the need arises and not be extorted. I'd talk on the passages that commands us about giving and also explain those portions that seem to say that people could make a living from preaching the Gospel.

Commandments About Christian Giving

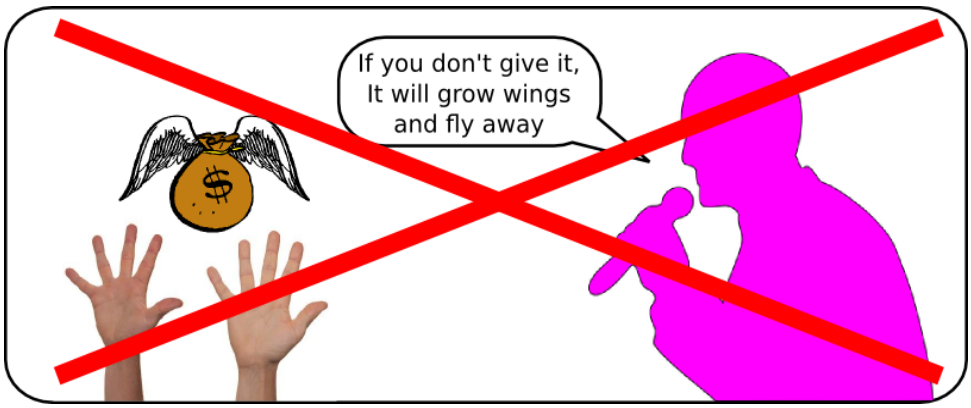
"God loveth a cheerful giver."

(2 Corinthians 9:7)

While we are encouraged, both by example and actual commandments, to give throughout the Bible, much of all we have to guide us in the New Testament about how to give can be found in the 9th chapter of 2nd Corinthians. We need to study it carefully to see how needs in the church should be catered for.

Let us take a look at few things we can derive from scriptures about giving below:

1. Christian giving is according to what you purpose in your heart: "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give..." (2 Corinthians 9:7)



Giving is supposed to be according to what you have the mind of giving. This is very contrary to the tithe doctrine which is practiced in many climes that says failure to pay your tithe is to rob God, and that if you don't pay it, the canckerworm and palmerworms would destroy your harvest and that there'll be holes in your pocket and all manner of things that should frighten anyone who works hard for his money as well as those who love God and don't wish to "rob" him. By this threat, people are forced to give.However, we must give with a willing heart. Now someone may say that a Christian can give his tithe willingly, but the passage goes, "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart." You should define the amount of things you wish to give. Whether it be up to 10% of what you have, or below, or above. There's no specification as to the amount. You must give according to what you desire and no one should press others to give more or less. So if Christian giving should be willingly according to what each individual purposes in his heart, then it of necessity excludes tithes, first fruit, and other types of giving that defines the amount you're to give. The Christian has the liberty to define how much he's willing to give, or whether not to give at all, in every given circumstance.

2. Christian giving is done cheerfully: "...God loveth a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:7)

Sometimes people are forced (not physically but by cajoling) to give to the extent of crying and preachers encourage it quoting the Bible where it says, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." (Psalm 126:5). But that doesn't apply here. The giving that God requires of we Christians is not sowing in tears. Not even the Jews did God desire to sow in tears by this passage. This passage refers

to labour not giving, but the leaders of today want people to give in tears. I can assure you that if you give in tears (and not cheerfully as God desires) you are throwing your money away. Don't pretend to be cheerful, don't persuade yourself that you're not grieved, be very sincere to yourself, and in your sincerity consider if or not you're grieved giving a certain amount. If you're, please don't give. But give what you know you are willing and cheerful to give.

3. Christian giving is done willingly not with grudges nor out of compulsion: "...let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity..." (2 Corinthians 9:7)

This is also in line with giving willingly. Don't give what you are not willing to give. For this reason, I believe that their should be some level of secrecy (of course not classified secrecy) or anonymity in the way people are to give when the need arises. After all, Jesus says, "But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth." (Matthew 6:3). Once you know people know what you're giving, you can't be sincere in your motive of giving it.

If there is a knowledge about what I give, I may give beyond my will just because I'm ashamed of the littleness of what I have in mind, or just to show off that I'm able to give (probably to make people see or think that I'm wealthy) I may give way beyond I had the mind to give. So some level of secrecy or anonymity is very important as it will increase the level of sincerity in giving.

We also are not to give out of necessity. If there is no secrecy or anonymity in giving then a form of necessity is placed on the givers. For this reason, we must remove every form of compulsion from giving, whether it be verbal, psycological, and of course physical.

4. Christian giving is to meet a need. "And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need." (Acts 2:44 - 2:45)

Now this is key. You, as a Christian, give to a need and not for wages. All the times we see people giving in scriptures were for needs, not for wages. The Bible says, "And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need." (Acts 2:44 - 2:45). If you ask me, if giving was for wages, the payment should have been done to the apostles who did many wonders and signs as we see in verse 43. Rather, they only gave to those in need. The apostles weren't selling their preaching, signs, wonders, etc. Despite this incredible display of benevolence by the brethren, the apostles remained poor clearly confirming to us that they did not receive wages or any form of profit from the forwardness with which people gave. We can see proof of this clearly in the next chapter where the Bible records, "Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none..." (Acts 3:6). He wasn't lying. And though we still read further in the next chapter where it says, "Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, And laid them down at the apostles’ feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need." (Acts 4:34 - 35). We have no reason to think that they became any richer by their services to God.

So we must know that Christian giving is to cater for a need or the needy and not for wages as is practiced today, for Christian ministry is not a career.

5. Give not out of covetousness: "Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before, that the same might be ready, as a matter of bounty, and not as of covetousness." (2 Corinthians 9:5)

Today, to make people give abundantly in many fund raisers, a lot of stories are told of how someone gave all the little he had in his possession and God blessed him greatly beyond what he could ever have imagined. With such stories, those raising funds stir up covetousness in the minds of the givers and out of covetousness they give. For this reason, they could walk past a friend in dire need, or ignore their unpaid employees, to give in a fund raiser in which they're promised abundance of reward. They ignore the dire need of their friend, and their unpaid employees, because they're not benevolent, but they give in such a fund raiser because they're covetous. They are giving with what they think they'd get in mind. While it seems like they're doing good in giving, greed, selfishness, and covetousness fills their hearts all the while. This is very wrong. We must give out of benevolence and not out of covetousness.

Jesus said, "And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful." (Luke 6:34 - 36). So sheer benevolence is what should inspire us to give as Christians, not what we would get in return.

6. Giving to God is giving what he commanded us to give: "...be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil." (Ecclesiastes 5:1)

Many people think that every thing given in church is given to God. But Christian giving is giving according to the commandments of God. If God did not command it, it is not Christian giving. It is not giving to God.

We read in the fifth chapter of Ecclesiastes that when you go into the house of God, be more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of fools. So we see that in the very house of God we can give the sacrifice of fools. And this we are told in the same chapter that it is evil. So Christian giving is giving according to what God has commanded not just because we give in a church. When you give tithe that God hasn't commanded you, you give a sacrifice of fools. And that is evil and unChristian.

7. Giving in itself is not an act of honouring God. With that said it is easily seen that giving is not honouring God as some preachers interpret it. They usually quote Proverbs 3:9 to prove their point, where it says, "Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase." Pastor Adeboye, in Open Heaven, his daily devotional, tried to define this honour as giving to someone what he doesn't need bringing an example from honourary awards, that such awards are given to people who don't really need it. So by this he meant to say you honour God when you give money to the church though God doesn't need it. How wrong.

Well here's the right understanding of this scripture. The Bible says, "Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?" (Romans2:23). If

breaking the law of God by disobedience is what it means to dishonour him, it is obvious that to honour him is to keep his commandments. So what the Bible is saying in Proverbs 3:9 is that the commandment of first fruit should be kept, thereby honouring God. It is the fact that it is commanded that makes keeping it an act of honouring God not because giving is itself an act of honour to God. Where it is not commanded, giving it is not honouring him. This should also be considered with point 6 above. We should understand that the Old Testament is a shadow of the new as the Bible says, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." While first fruit was commanded to be given in the Old Testament, it is a shadow of Christ who is our first fruit (1 Corinthians 15:20). We have no such commandment to give first fruit as Pastor Adeboye and many other preachers claim.

To honour God is to obey him. Not to come to church to give what he hasn't commanded you. This also apply to annul all the foolish giving teachings that says you can celebrate, glorify, magnify, etc. God by giving. This they also say that if you are using this money to honour or celebrate God, it must be very big. You shouldn't honour God with a small amount of money. This they mean that if you give a small amount of money to them, you dishonour God.

Let it be clear that you can't honour God with money. If you wish to honour him, keep his commandments, love your enemies, forgive, be kind, flee from sin, resist the Devil, show to the world the holiness of our holy God. Live a life that when the world looks at you, they would give glory to your father which is in Heaven. This is what it means to honour God.

How Should Funds Be Solicited

"Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before, that the same might be ready, as a matter of bounty, and not as of covetousness."

(2 Corinthians 9:5)

Having seen some of the things that characterises Christian giving, we can easily know how funds should be solicited. In soliciting for funds to cater for a need, we must solicit in a way that each and every giver gives in the spirit of Christian giving. Also in this case, we can learn a lot from how apostle Paul solicited for funds to cater for the need of the apostles in Jerusalem.

Just pass across the information about the need, saying how urgent, pressing, or desperate the need at hand may be, and let people give what they are willing to give. Anything beyond the mere passing across of truthful information is to press them to give beyond what they're willing. And this is unChristian.

There should be no cajoling in soliciting for funds. People should not be promised good for giving and they should not be threatened for not giving. The good act of giving should be praised and not necessarily the giver, and those who don't give should on no account be criticised or made to feel or look bad. I like how Paul presented his solicitation for the apostles in Jerusalem. He said, "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." (2 Corinthians 9:8). He said God is able and not God

will. So he didn't promise any good to the givers, but directed his words to remove the fears that can hinder them from being forward to give.

We must also learn that if we solicit for funds it must be for genuine reasons and to meet legitimate needs. We must not instil fear or false hope in the givers. We must make sure that all who gives give in the true spirit of Christian giving.

Seemingly Confusing Passages About Giving And What They Mean

"And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."

(2 Peter 3:15 - 16)

It is glaring that the Bible can appear confusing, but we must know that the Bible is not confusing in any way but appears so sometimes due to the limitations of our understanding. So I'd wish to touch on few things that seem to be confusing about giving.

1. The first and seemingly confusing one is this, "Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the

gospel." (1 Corinthians 9:13 - 14). While the Bible is pointing to a salient fact here, we can not from it draw a commandment. For though it says clearly, "the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel," yet, it didn't say HOW they should live of the gospel. Is it that they are to collect money from the government, the church, the unbelievers they approach to preach the gospel to, etc. So it is not sufficient for us to draw a commandment. In the Old Testament, we see clear instructions for the priests how they should be catered for, but we see no instructions as to how we (for all Christians must preach the gospel or advance the Kingdom of God one way or the other) should live of it. For if we all are called to have one ministry or the other for the sake of God, then we all must live of it.

But here is what we should understand of this passage by considering these other of the following verses:

- "What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel." (1 Corinthians 9:18). Though in preaching the gospel we are worthy of wages, yet to accept wages is to abuse our power in the gospel. So are we commanded to abuse it in 1 Corinthians 9:13 - 14?

- "If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ." (1 Corinthians 9:12). Accepting wages will hinder the gospel of Christ as we can see clearly today. So, did we get a commandment to hinder the gospel of Christ?

Summary is that preaching the gospel is worthy of wages, but if we, for any reason do, we hinder the gospel of Christ and we abuse our power. Though it is worthy of wages, it is never the less disobedience to receive such wages.

Further more we must understand that when Jesus sent his disciples out (in Matthew 10:5-15) saying that they should not provide for themselves but that they should accept the offer of people to cater for them, he said, "the workman is worthy of his meat." Here we see clearly that preaching the gospel is worthy of reward. However, when he spoke about the ministry (which is characterised by his absence from this world) of the end time dispensation of which we find ourselves, we read, "And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing. Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip..." (Luke 22:35 - 36). Here when Jesus clearly indicates that he wants us to provide for ourselves in serving him, he didn't mean that in preaching the gospel we stopped being worthy. No, but as Lord, and seeing ahead to see the nature of the assignment, he commanded that we should provide for ourselves in serving. This is a sacrifice well pleasing to him. This is what Paul too was talking about in 1 Corinthians 9:13 - 14. We are worthy of profit, but to use it would be both abuse of power and would be to hinder the gospel of Christ. This also agrees with what Paul says in Acts 20:33-35.

2. The second and seemingly confusing is: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that

treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward." (1 Timothy 5:17 - 18)

While this indeed and categorically says those who labour in word and doctrine should be counted worthy of double honour, and honour has some elements of monetary reward attached to it. If we should write off the monetary aspect of the word honour, like I was tempted to do, the next verse confirms that the sense in which it was used has to do with monetary reward. Also Jesus refers to honouring parents in supporting them financially.

So I do admit that there should be monetary support for elders who serve well, but we must understand in what way it was presented and not take it the way most preachers like to present it. It is support (assistance) and not wages. There's a world of difference between the two. So let us look at what it means indeed to honour elders.

First of all, to understand fully in what sense honour is used in the Bible here to refer to giving, we should go a few verses up where it also says, "Honour widows that are widows indeed." (1 Timothy 5:3). When writing this article I did my findings on what to honour means, and I saw people (mostly preachers) rattling away in their writings about giving money to church leaders. One article gave list of people we should honour but no one mentions widows. It is a shame. If preachers are the ones omitting this themselves, it shows how self centred many preachers are today. If it is not preachers who do this omission, then it reflects how self centred preachers have very badly shaped the minds of people. But it is in the way that we see honouring of widows that we should see honouring of elders, only double and not more. When the Bible says honour widows that are widows indeed, can we really consider that wages? So we can see that honour is support.

It is giving to particular need so that if there were no need at hand, there's no point giving. For this reason, preaching cannot be a primary occupation of any preacher, elder, or whatsoever, just as widowhood is not an occupation. They must work to fend for themselves, but where there is a need at hand which they couldn't avert, probably because of the time they spend labouring in word and doctrine, then we should give to cater for that need. We can't place church leaders on salary or wages. It is unscriptural to do so.

Secondly, it says, "let the elders that rule well..." Leaders who are worthy of such support are elders, not just anybody who comes out of a seminary, not just anybody who starts his own church, but an elder must be genuinely so. In the third chapter of 1st Timothy, we see a description of what a bishop and deacon should be like. While it did not make mention of elder in this passage, I believe these descriptions qualifies an elder too. One among the things that describe people of such posts is this, "...not greedy of filthy lucre... not covetous." (1 Timothy 3:3). When we see people pressing for money for any reason, they are automatically unfit to be elders. Let them leave and go after money that the church may have her peace.

Summary

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."

(Ecclesiastes 12:13)

Now, whether or not people should be paid for service to God, we know most certainly that people should not be cajoled, forced, etc. to do so. What ever is given to support elders, widows, and less privileged of the church must be out of free will and should be benevolently done. Any

doctrine that stipulates how much should be given is not a Christian doctrine. No body is to make anyone feel bad for not giving. Church leaders should quit pressing their congregation for money with their sermons. If they have a problem with the money they have, they can as well leave the pulpit.

Anybody who thinks that earning a living from service to God would enable him to serve God better should think again. The apostles served God to a very great extent that has been unequaled, not with money, but with zeal, obedience, love, and the Holy Ghost. These are sufficient to serve God to any extent. Money can't do you much good as it can do harm. As I explained in my previous article, EGYPTIAN CAPTIVITY, it is a poison. Making a living primarily from serving God will kill you for sure.

Furthermore, we all are members of his one body. I don't understand how the eye can pay the ear to see on its behalf, or the leg pay the nose to walk, and so on. It is understandable that one member of the body can assist another member in some cases, say when listening to music with your earpiece on, when walking on the street, the eye have to do more work in ensuring you don't get knocked down by an oncoming vehicle whose horn or sound you couldn't hear. In such a case, the eyes only does more work in assistance without reward (so to speak). The cases where it is justifiable to be paid by another to serve God is very rare. Let every member faithfully do his work to the edification of the body of Christ and fund himself.

This is therefore my advise, serve God in the best of your capacity. If you don't have enough money to serve him beyond what you're already doing, please just continue to serve him in that capacity. Usually, what can hinder service is lack of will, zeal, love, and power of the Holy Ghost, not

lack of money. So serve him only to the extent you can sponsor and where God does not provide through the free will benevolence of others or other means, just keep serving him in that capacity and be thankful to him.

If you have friends or people willing to work together with you in your ministry and bear the burden including financial burden, that is good. If people of themselves wish to donate to help your ministry, great. But don't put the burden of your ministry on unwilling shoulders and remember not to make promises in any way to those who give to us, neither should we threaten those who don't. Paul wrote, "Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants." (Philippians 2:25). Epaphroditus was Paul's friend who ministered to his wants. Ministry can also be supported by the wilful contributions of friends/companions. Paul referred to Epaphroditus as his companion in labour and in this capacity he ministered to his wants.

As for elders who oversee the church, they should understand how to delegate things to others so as to have time to work for a living. Things that pertain to doctrine and edifying the church should be spread to many while they handle key things. They should not try to be wealthy in this world. They should look at the apostles of our Lord how they remained poor even in the midst of people who were so forward to give.

There are many things to say about Christian giving, but the bottom line is that no one should be forced in any way to give and everything must be done in obedience to God. Christian giving is done wilfully and out of a benevolent mind as God has commanded.

May God help us in Jesus' name. Amen.

Prayer: *Dear God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we pray that you make your children forward to give and much more forward to serve you, and may in active service for your dear name find it more blessed to give than to receive. Help us to understand truly how and when you want us to give. Shun the extortion and abuses of wolves in sheep clothing from our midst. This we ask in Jesus matchless name. Amen.*

THEN WILL I HEAR FROM HEAVEN

Posted on Jan 14, 2018

THEN WILL I HEAR
FROM HEAVEN
My message to the church of Christ for 2018
"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."
(2 Chronicles 7:14)

My message to the Church of Christ for 2018

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

(2 Chronicles 7:14)

It is good for us to speak to one another as often as possible for edification, reprove, rebuke, exhortation and more. In 2018 I earnestly hope we come of out of the confusion we have tagged Christianity. We must return to the orderliness of the Holy Ghost and align our ways to the Holy Scriptures. This is when we would be living up to the calling of our most holy faith. I wish to share to us the way to that blessedness.

Need For Sincerity In Obedience

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

(2 Chronicles 7:14)

Many preachers quote the scripture above, but as is the way of many who profess Christianity in this age where we are fast losing our identity, is to carry out God's command with a dubious heart. For long people have been praying, claiming to obey that scripture, but it is with an insincere heart. That the prayer has been long prayed without result shows us to what extent we are pretentious in keeping God's commands. In Nigeria, many preachers keep holding prayer meetings with this verse as their focus text, but till today Nigeria remains a land of untold hardship, confusion, and no guarantee for tomorrow. Let us note the word, "then," in this verse. It means when we meet the conditions listed we reap the fruit of gaining God's attention, forgiveness of sin, and the healing of our lands. The healing of our land is the only manifestly seen of the three benefits listed and it is the evidence of the other two. However, if we have been playing our part in keeping this command, is God being unfaithful that the land remains sick? I wish to share with us in this article the things I've noticed about how we have been trying to keep this command, and point us to the right direction where we may find healing for our lands.

Humility

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves..."

(2 Chronicles 7:14)

First we skip this very important aspect of the command and jump to where it says, "pray," because we are so full of what to tell God and have no time for introspective reflection, contemplation, and self examination. So we love where it says pray, but we omit the command to humble ourselves.

This is hard to judge externally but we can see that in the lives of many professing Christians we can't see the marks of true humility. All we see is still haughtiness, pride, and self justification, and all these while seeking healing for our lands from God. Humbling ourselves has to do with getting off our illusionary lofty state to the shame of our reality.

Such a state is marked by contrition, weeping, and earnest seeking of the face of God. In describing this, James wrote, "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness." But insted of mourning, weeping, and being heavy for the shame of our reality, we are dancing, happy, laughing, and celebrating victory in a state of defeat. So where's the humility?

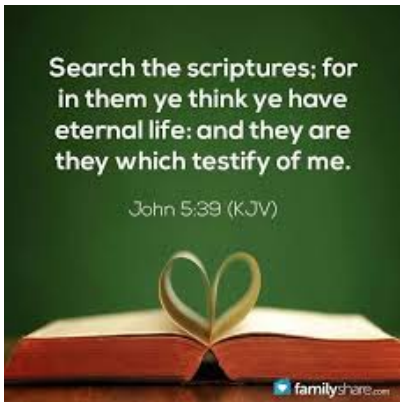
If God must hear us in 2018, we must humble ourselves. We mustn't skip the commandment. We must get of our illusionary excellence and wake to the shame of our reality. If we do this in 2018, there're abundant of promises for us but one I love so much is this, "Humble yourselves in the

sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up." (James 4:10). We shall be lifted to true lofty heights of conspicous excellence, not by our own power, for we needn't stress ourselves or make any effort at it, but he, by his own mighty power, shall lift us up from any depth to which we have fallen.

Seek The Face Of God

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall... seek my face..."

(2 Chronicles 7:14)


Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.
John 5:39 (KJV)
familyshare.com

We skip humility, jump to prayer, and forget the rest. God wants us to seek his face. If we sought the face of God our practices shouldn't have been so diametrically opposed to scriptures. In which of your congregations don't you find women talking contrary to (1 Corinthians 14:34-38 and 1 Timothy 2:11-15. But we seek God's face. We delight in denominations forgeting that it is one of the Lord's chiefest will that his church be united in one. We fold our hands and close our mouths to watch new churches springing up every day dividing the church of Christ into bits and pieces. But we do seek his face. The list of our errors goes on and on. I won't enumerate them here. But he who seeks God's

face must of necessity have his life in absolute agreement with the word of God. Our ways being so opposed to the scriptures and our delight in this erroneous ways is a clear indication of how little we really seek God.We don't seek him, we just want to do what we like. We select the parts of the Bible we wish to obey and leave the others. There shall be no healing with such a mind set. We must seek him in truth if we want him to hear us and heal our lands.

Turn Away From Our Wicked Ways

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall... turn from their wicked ways..."

(2 Chronicles 7:14)

So we must turn from our wicked ways. First of all, the most wicked ways to turn away from is the dubiousness with which we seek God. We seek God insincerely. We love him, praise him, follow him, etc. with dubious heart and not in truth.

Next, church founders must close down their churches and push for a united church that bears the name of Christ alone. If we scatter the church Christ is trying to gather have we not taken a stance against him. Did he not tell us that people who do such are against him. Listen to what he says, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." (Matthew 12:30). Why then do people hypocritically open new churches here and there and claim to be doing such in the service of God only to scatter abroad his sheep? Let church founders stop their hypocrisy, close down their churches,

and push for one united church. Failure to do this is to maintain a stance against Jesus.

As I don't expect obedience here, though it be the word of God that commands us so, therefore I must say to the rest of professing Christians that should these founders fail to close down their churches, then you have to choose between your "leaders" and Christ. If your leaders could save you, stick by them. But if you know that Christ only can save you, then you had better take a stance with Christ against these church founders. But remember that it is Jesus who says, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." If you choose your church founders above Christ, you show how ungrateful you are to the redeemer.

We must go back to scriptures and align our ways to his own way. If we could do these things, he shall hear us and heal our lands. If we fail, we should not expect any favour from him.

Pray

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall... pray..."

(2 Chronicles 7:14)

I decided to speak about this last of all because the other things is what gives bearing to this one. Also, we are already doing this very well, it is only that we are doing it amiss. Why? As it stands the prayers we've been praying are just like tinkling of cymbal. There's no meaning to it. God promised that if we do our part of humility, seeking his face, and turning from our wicked ways, he will heal our land. But because we ignore these other things our prayer is just constant "heal our Land." When he promises, you needn't pray again for him to heal your land. He's not a fool that promised. He said what he meant and meant what he said. You just do your part and he'd do his.If we humble ourselves then shall our prayer have more meaning. So our prayer should reflect our humility, we should rather seek his face in prayer than telling what we want him to do. We should rather seek for grace to repent in prayer both for ourselves and other members of the church of Christ. This is what we should be praying about. And when we pray in faith, we must do our part to make that faith fruitful, for faith without works is dead (James 2:20).

All the commands should bring us to the point of prayer. If you wonder how the church could be united and what your part could be in ensuring this, bring it here to the place of prayer. It is here that you'd seek God's face to ask him what he would have you do in uniting his church. It is here you'd

ask him for forgiveness and grace to do his will. It is here you can get strength to do his will. It is when we as a people by means of other things commanded in this verse we come to God in sincere prayer that he would heal our land. That is a guarantee.

Prayer: *Dear God, thank you for ushering us into this amazing year of 2018. Thank you for all your boundless Goodness in the past years. Father, today we wish to request that you give us the grace to be humble, to seek your face, and to turn from our wicked ways in truth. Grant us this we pray in Jesus' most powerful name. Amen.*

DO NOT OFFER SACRIFICE OF FOOLS

Posted on Jan 21, 2018

"Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil."

(Ecclesiastes 5:1)

Indeed when there is a virtue, there is its vice also. It is very possible that when we wish to render sacrifices to God that we may tend to offer sacrifices contrary to his requirements. We must be very careful therefore that in our sacrifices, we offer acceptable sacrifices.

I know that many think that everything you give, especially in church, is a sacrifice to God, and there is no sacrifice that he doesn't accept, but the verse above clearly debunks the rightness of this thought. It says that we should be more ready to hear than to give sacrifices of fools. Meaning that there are sacrifices which are foolish though they be offered to God. This sacrifice is considered as evil, and thus is an abomination. In that he says "the house of God," we know full well that he also refer to the gathering of God's people. So we know that it is very possible to offer foolish unacceptable sacrifices in the very house of God. In the same vain, in the church, many do offer sacrifices of fools over and over again. These sacrifices are evil, and thus unacceptable to God.

Now what is it that defines what a sacrifice of fools is? A sacrifice of fools is a sacrifice that is not based on obedience to God, but on the contrary is based on ignorance. Every sacrifice based on ignorance is evil. For this reason, the writer says "be more ready to hear." It is better not to offer at all than to offer these evil sacrifices that are based on ignorance. Only offer things that you are sure is commanded by God and if it is commanded by him, do it to the uttermost extent of the commandment. Don't stop halfway in obedience.

We have people who preach that a Christian ought to pay tithe, and we have those who accept that too. In fact majority of the church believe this. However, the truth is that tithe (given by Christians) is a sacrifice of fools. Your church leaders are not your priests. No part of the Bible speaks of them as the sort priests though they claim to be. We have only the royal priesthood, which includes every believer, and Jesus our great High Priest and he alone is the high priest. Where did pastoral priesthood, or ecclesiastical priesthood come from? Many also give all manner of seed and other crafted offerings thinking they were obeying God. Brethren, read your Bible. If what you're doing is not commanded of God, cease from it though you think it is good. The foolish givers in offering the fools' sacrifice have only ended up sponsoring church division and infighting thinking they were doing something great.

Now I've spoken of only giving here because this is a major abuse done in the church of God. But this applies to every act of sacrificing to God. Where God requires a sheep, don't give him a pig. Where he requires a dove, don't give him a raven. Where he requires grain, don't give him creeping things. Just give him what he asks for alone.

Also don't give God things because you've rejected them. Those things that you would rather do without, and because you don't like them you offer it to God as a sacrifice. A man sees that lying is ruining him, so he stops lying because he'd rather do without it. A man sees that stealing is ruining his reputation, and so offers stealing to God as a sacrifice and says, "take it Lord. For your sake I steal no more." I don't mean that we should continue in these things, offering God these things alone amounts to just offering him contemptible things. Even a wise pagan would not be a thief, a liar, an adulterer, a cheat, etc. What therefore is the difference between we and they? Are we mere wise pagans? Should there not be something more for which we can say we are different from the pagan? We must offer everything to God. We must not stop at these evil things. We must offer to God things that are rightfully ours. We must offer him our rest, our time, our peace, and pleasure, our wealth, our prosperity, honour, and every other thing. To stop at giving God these evil things is to be like Saul. He went on God's assignment but only destroyed everything without value and kept the good ones. Destroying the bad things is part of the commandment commanded him by God, but stopping at destroying only vile things to keep good ones total disobedience. That is a sacrifice of a fool. For the Bible says, "But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly." (1 Samuel 15:9). The same way we offer to God vile and refuse things and keep the good ones. We deny him our time, our honour, our prosperity, and every thing that are of value, and give him the things by which we incur losses. Of such foolish sacrifice, Saul, like many of would do, justified himself fully as it is written, "And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD..." (1 Samuel

15:20). So my brethren, when Jesus told us to even hate our lives, let us not stop at anything short of that. Let us give him the whole of ourselves.

Do not let the society dictate what your religious commitment to your God should be like. The society is only bothered about general well being of people and not much about your relationship with God. For this reason, they desire that people should not steal, people should not lie, people should not murder and so on, so they set up institutions to make people have the mind to live this way. This is very good and only wise societies do this. For this reason, people often consider these things as standards for godly living. But society is not really bothered about your relationship with God nor your commitment to him because it ought not to. What has the society got to do with standing between you and God so as to draw you close to him? So do not let the religiousness of a good society place a limitation on your commitment to God so as to limit your commitment to him to not stealing, fighting, lying, killing, etc. While the society is good and wise to encourage and demand this of you, it would amount to sacrificing the sacrifice of fools to offer only these to God. You must go further to sacrifice even things that are of profit to you. Those things that are for your ease and comfort. You must let them all go if they stand in the way of complete obedience to God and expressing sincere love for the brethren.

There are also unsinful addictions. Things that are not sinful but, as addictions, don't let us walk with God as we ought to. Sometimes, we can go on and playing games switching from one to the other thereby having no time to pray, study the Bible, sing hymns, etc. Some people would even go on playing games for hours and hours and hours, and when they're tired, to take a break, they switch over to

movies and watch for hours and hours and hours, and when they're tired of that again, they switch to games again, and the cycle goes on. This is not supposed to be the way of a Christian life. Surely these things are not sinful. It is not that you're murdering people for hours and hours and hours, nor is it telling lies for hours and hours and hours, but it is just games. It doesn't even have to be those games in which you kill people, it may be a game as simple as football. But it is not the way of a Christian to choose these things over spending quality time with God and serving him. Let us sacrifice these things for the sake of God seeing that the time is short. I'm not saying these things are evil, but we mustn't let it rob us of our time with God.

What makes these things somewhat hard to give up is that we try to imagine life without them. Being mere imaginations they are far from the truth. You haven't lived without them, yet you wish to paint mere pictures of how life is without them and base our decision on these false pictures. It is very likely that until we stop a thing in reality we may never know how insignificant they are and how well we could do without them.

Another about giving up these things for the sake of God is that we don't feel the repercussion as we do things of this world. People can leave the most interesting tv show when they see that it is getting late because they must be early to work the next day. People could abandon the most interesting game to go find something to eat, because they're hungry. But who feels hungry, or who gets fired when we refuse to read our Bibles? None. But he that has tasted and seen that the Lord is good, that in his presence there is fullness of joy, and that walking with him is joy unspeakable and full of glory, such can never give up his time with God for these mondane things. So let us open our eyes and see the true poverty of the things of these world

and the riches of following Christ and choose him above the things of the world.

Let's go the whole way in offering sacrifices of the wise and not of fools. Give your all to Jesus. Put all on the altar of obedience to God and love for the brethren. Paul wrote, "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." (Philippians 3:7 - 8). Paul, remember, was a Pharisee. He probably didn't steal, he probably didn't tell lies, he probably didn't fornicate, he probably didn't do any of these things we often wish to sacrifice to God, but those righteousness, and things that were rightly his' and for his benefit he counted them as loss and nothing but dung. He sacrificed life, comfort, wife and family, home, favour of the Jews, and much more for two things alone; obedience to God and love for the brethren.

Yes, we may not have a calling like Paul where we would refuse to marry or have a family, house, etc. Because seeing that these things would not allow him carry out God's command to him in person, he sacrificed them all, as important as they seem. So also, at every point in life where God's command and love for the brethren demands that we sacrifice all, let's sacrifice all. Let us not debate in our mind whether or not we should, let's just do it. Even when we marry, let us marry only if we know that it will help us to serve God better and refusal to marry would make us not to be able to obey God as we should. So in this case marriage is not deterring us from obedience to God or from the love of the brethren, but, seeing what manner of nature we have, and if we haven't been given the grace to defy that nature, let us marry so that we can obey God to a fuller extent. So our life, whether by marriage or by

celibacy, must be lived in complete obedience to God and love for the brotherhood.

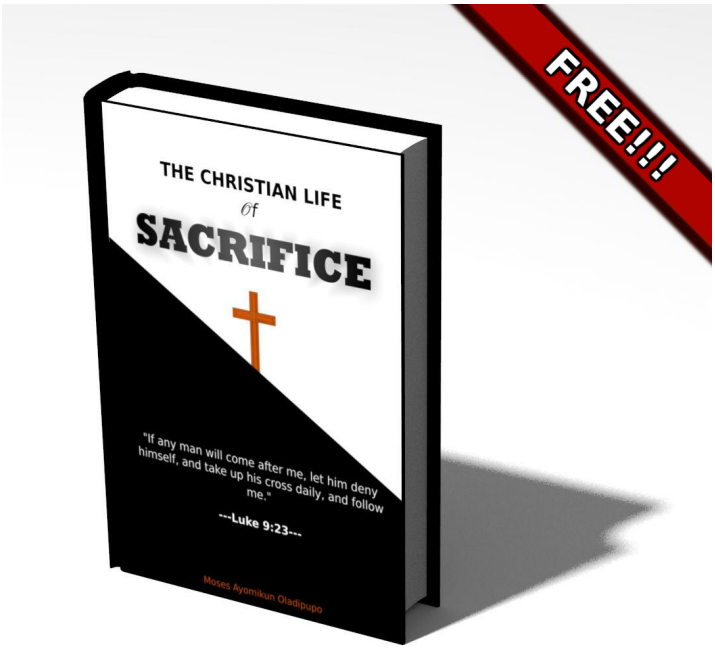
We should not consider what Paul sacrificed to seem as if different people have their own special calling to a unique level of sacrifice. But even in the case of marriage, we shouldn't see it as if God has allowed us where he refused Paul, but rather we must see marriage as a choice meant to enable us serve God better. So we are sacrificing the freedom of celibacy for a life of marriage for the sole reason of being able to serve God better and pleasing him rather than burning with lust. For this reason, we shouldn't go into marriage as the ideal thing or the way to go, but we must only accept to marry when we conclude for sure that we can't serve God well without getting married. So, people ought to marry only having carefully considered the possibility of being unmarried, and choose to marry when and only when we know that without it we are likely to burn with lust which will displease God.

Let us not offer a fool's sacrifice but put our all on the altar. From the start to the finish of Jesus' demands, we can see that what he requested for was nothing short of all. It therefore is a sacrifice of fools to give him in part and not in whole. Since he requested for all, let us, as wise, give him all. It is certainly not easy to sacrifice all these things, but are you willing to live for God alone? Are you willing to place him as the first priority in your life? If so, then must all things be sacrificed. You can't have God and the world. But if you'd be desirous to have God above all things else (the strength may be absent), his grace is available to enable us sacrifice the sacrifice of the wise which is well pleasing to him.

Prayer: *O Father, I see that it is very common and easy for me to offer refuse things thinking I'm offering you so much.*

Forgive me for this error, and grant me the grace to offer to you, and for you, all you require from me in absolute obedience and love. In Jesus' name I've prayed. Amen.

From my book titled: THE CHRISTIAN LIFE OF SACRIFICE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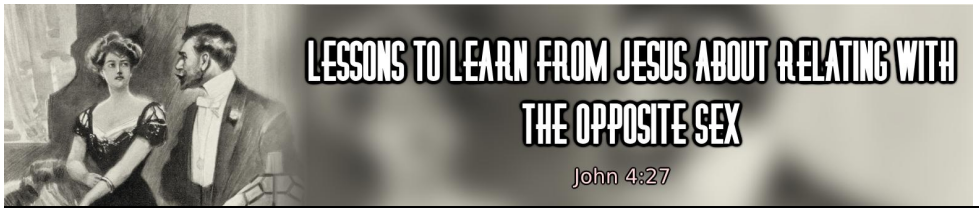
LESSONS TO LEARN FROM JESUS ABOUT RELATING WITH THE OPPOSITE SEX

Posted on Mar 3, 2018



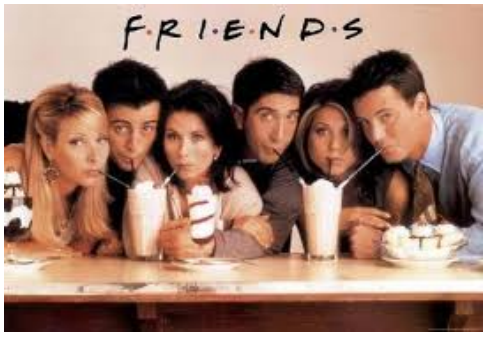
"And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman..."
(John 4:27)

Very many people, as a matter of fact most people, desire to live but not many are taught how to live. For this reason, they live badly. The media has such a loud voice that if you're not pointing the right way to people especially young ones, they'd automatically start taking orders from the ever willing corrupt media. But for Christians, Jesus remains our perfect example and we should take our orders from the examples he laid down.

Seeing the way young ones relate with people of the opposite sex is quite disturbing as it seems quite glaring that the pattern they live by is from the world and not from Christ. Some married people too act in ways not appropriate to people of the opposite sex, both married and unmarried. I therefore wish to present what we can learn

from Christ for the consideration and correction of the willing.

First, a Christian ought to look at how far he could go from what could tempt him to sin and not how close he could go to what could tempt him to sin without falling into it. The elements of casual friendship is to keep company, talk about things, share experiences, etc. I believe all these things can be done even better with people of the same sex. So if you leave the host of people of the same sex around you to go keep friendship with a person of the opposite sex, then there is probably something you're looking for in that friendship that a person of the same sex can't give. If they could, you would have sticked to people of the same sex.

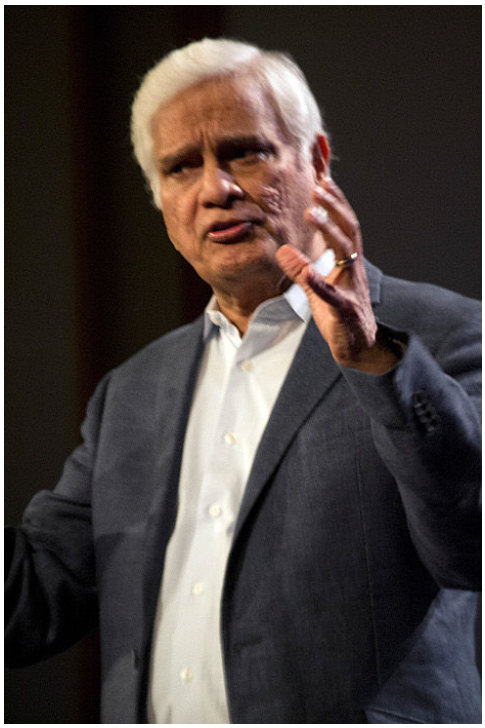


I very well understand the prevalent way of thinking of today that there is nothing wrong with drawing close to people of the opposite sex for casual friendship. In fact some even encourage it under the pretext that it has it's benefits (probably academic). But this is not true. If we are to take it that way, even smoking has its benefits too. It is wrong to deliberately draw close to people of the opposite sex for whatever reason except for the purpose of marriage. So if you have people of the opposite sex as classmates, let them remain classmates. If you have them as colleagues, let them remain colleagues. There's no point furthering that relationship unless there's something you're

looking for.Now to what we can learn from Christ, read John 4:27. The apostles were shocked to find Jesus talking with the Samaritan woman. There are two lessons we could learn from that. 1st, Jesus was not such a person that draws close unnecessarily to women, else his disciples would not have been shocked. Secondly in that it says, "no man said, What seekest thou? or Why talkest thou with her?" it confirms that if you draw close to a person of the opposite sex, there should be something you are looking for.

So let us be careful lest we live in ways that would displease God or even cause others to stumble. I advise therefore that we keep our distance from the opposite sex as much as possible. It is good to have a strict moral principle that'll guide us to avoid mistakes in life. It is a thing of honour that even before you get married, you honour the one you'd marry by your conduct now in keeping to yourself even while you haven't known who he/she is. We ought not to let the moral standards of the world guide us. They tell you that things that can't kill you doesn't matter. The moral standards of even the church is lamentably low. In times such as this, we need to fix a steady gaze on Jesus and how he lived.The world today is ignorant in morals but smart in technology. It is hard to learn this way of life from the world and even the church.

We can learn it from no other than Jesus himself in the verse I shared above. You must read the Bible continuously and examine yourself from time to time and make improvements where necessary. Above all study the life of Jesus. There are many things about him that seem hidden, but when you study his life, you would see an excellent pattern for yours.



A very prominent and intellectual Christian apologist, Ravi Zacharias, who I'm convinced has good moral principles, got into a case he never wished he'd get into. He did nothing wrong, but he made the mistake of not staying far enough from a person of the opposite sex. Funny that the good man related with the woman and her husband which is even very safe and appropriate, but, just because of some conversation by email he had with the lady, the end isn't what he wished for. Listen to what he had to say after his ordeal and the lesson he shares with each and every one of us:"I have learned a difficult and painful lesson through this

ordeal. As a husband, father, grandfather, and leader of a Christian ministry I should not have engaged in ongoing communication with a woman other than my wife. I failed to exercise wise caution and to protect myself from even the appearance of impropriety, and for that I am profoundly sorry. I have acknowledged this to my Lord, my wife, my children, our ministry board, and my colleagues.

"Let me state categorically that I never met this woman alone, publicly or privately. The question is not whether I solicited or sent any illicit photos or messages to another woman—I did not, and there is no evidence to the contrary —but rather, whether I should have been a willing participant in any extended communication with a woman not my wife. The answer, I can unequivocally say, is no, and I fully accept responsibility. In all my correspondence with thousands of people in 45 years of ministry, I have never been confronted with a situation such as this, and God and my family and close friends know how grieved I have been.

"In my 45 years of marriage to Margie, I have never engaged in any inappropriate behavior of any kind. I love my wife with all my heart and have been absolutely faithful to her these more than 16,000 days of marriage, and have exercised extreme caution in my daily life and travels, as everyone who knows me is aware. I have long made it my practice not to be alone with a woman other than Margie and our daughters—not in a car, a restaurant, or anywhere else. Upon reflection, I now realize that the physical safeguards I have long practiced to protect my integrity should have extended to include digital communications safeguards. I believe—and indeed would counsel others—that the standards of personal conduct are necessarily higher for Christian leaders..."

Read the full text here: http://rzim.org/global-blog/ravi-zacharias-statement-on-my-federal-lawsuit/

Mike Pence, the Vice President of The United States of America, a born again Christian, has a rule to his name. It's called the Mike Pence Rule. It states that, "he does not dine alone with any woman." This is also in line with the rule of late Billy Graham, the prominent evangelist who died recently. His rule mandates that men should not "eat, travel or meet alone with any women who [aren't] their wives." Pence, Billy Graham, and Ravi Zacharias, just to name three, didn't learn this way of living from the world, they learned it from Christ. All these have a testimony of being born again. These rule wasn't given their names because they formulated it, but this was the life of Christ and his in dwelling spirit must move men to behave accordingly. So I think it'll be better to call this chivalristic way of living "THE CHRIST RULE."May God teach us and grant us the grace to live in wisdom with the opposite sex in Jesus' name. Amen.

Prayer: *Our Father and our God, we thank you for the boundless examples we have as a rule to live by in the person of your most holy Son. Thank you for we see in him that chaste practice of living with wisdom with the opposite sex. Grant us help that we may live by this his example and every other to the glory of your name. Amen.*

PURITY IN KNOWLEDGE

Posted on Mar 17, 2018

"But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden."

(Revelation 2:24)

I wish to write briefly on what I term "purity in knowledge." The Bible keeps emphasising this, but it has been sadly ignored by many Christians. The Bible keeps emphasising that we should be careful about what we know, but sometimes we think we could be better if we knew unhelpful things. Some have said that demonology (study of demons and their operations) is helpful for a Christian. Others will pick up occultic books like the seventh book of Moses and think that it will help them know more. Such people are of the opinion that the Bible is good but it is not enough. The Bible speaks against such reasoning. If we know what the word of God is, then why not just stick to it. One lie can make you doubt all the truth you ever knew. Be careful what you read.

Keeping The Heart

"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."

(Proverbs 4:23)

King Solomon in the text above tells us that we are to keep our hearts with all diligence. We are not to keep it casually and accept to read every book offered to us by a friend,

colleague, or curiosity. I think Solomon was in the right place to say such. He had been a godly man but he dabbled into occultic practices and saw the full effect of that. He then warns "keep your heart with all diligence."

There are books that one could read and you'd start doubting that this world was created by God. There are movies you'd watch you'll lose the appetite to pray. There are lectures and seminars you'd attend that you'll despise the gathering together of the brethren. These effects are signs that a man's heart has been poorly kept and he is gradually dying. We are to keep our hearts from the knowledge of lies that will wrest with the truth in us or raise any doubt in us about the truth we know. We ought to be pure in all things including our knowledge. Let us not have the truth and lies dueling together in our single hearts.

There are many foolish questionings in the church today that arise from contentious people who think they have arrived at a superior knowledge by reading foolish books. I heard a lot of people talk about a book called "Da Vinci Code" and they said it reveals a lot of things. But the little I heard about it won't make me read it as I know that it reveals nothing, rather it blinds the eyes and obfuscates the truth. Despite saying many evil things about Jesus Christ that is contrary to scriptures many still go ahead to read it and think they've got some new knowledge that you don't have. They'll assume that they know that Jesus Christ had a wife which other Christians inferior to them don't know. That is just like thinking I have a superior knowledge because I know that all the trees in the forest have leaves of green plastic. What a knowledge! It was out of the book that the foolish saying that says "What really matters is what you believe" came about. By this faulty inference, the Biblical instructions are seen as just things we can choose

to believe or not to believe. If we choose to believe that there is hell for sinners, it matters only because we believe it. If we choose not to believe it, it does not matter any more. If we choose that God is real, it matters but if we don't believe, it doesn't matter whether or not he exists. Foolish. It will amaze you how such foolish knowledge from hell puffs up people. It takes a fool to be puffed up by foolishness.

Now how do we keep our heart diligently? Do we shut our ears to every sound? Do we shut our eyes from seeing anything in the resemblance of letters? I know that the Bible has been the principal builder of my life but some other books really helped too. What would have happened if I had refuse to read them in the bid to keep my heart with all diligence? I'm not sure, but I think it would have been to my disadvantage. The answer to this important question is found in the Bible where it is written "Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge." (Proverbs 14:7). It says we should depart from the presence of a fool WHEN we perceive that he doesn't have the lips of knowledge. Don't shut your ears to just everyone. But be quick to perceive if or not he has the lips of knowledge in him. If he has the lips of knowledge in him, not to listen to him would be to do yourself a mis-service. If he doesn't have the lips of knowledge in him, go from his presence. The author of Da Vinci Code didn't have the lips of knowledge so I departed from him. This will keep us wide open to everything so that

we don't miss anything that is good for us, while at the same time place a sieve over us to sieve out all evil from us.

Avoid Occultic Literatures

"But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden."

(Revelation 2:24)

When I was reading through the second chapter of Revelations, what shocked me was not that Jesus was displeased with some of the people of Thyatira for practicing the depths of Satan, but his displeasure was that they knew it. By this I knew that it is not practicing demonism, satanism, diabolism or any other evil practice that displeases God but even knowing them. Jesus was happy with those who had not known the depths of Satan. How many of us today go seeking to know what heretics believe and practice? I admit that through curiosity and assuming it were helpful I had sought to understand what heretics believed and practiced in time past. I believe there are times when we may bump into these doctrines undeliberately but we should not go seeking after them deliberately. Let us be content with the Bible and sink ourselves into it.

Jesus also says, "Take heed what ye hear." (Mark 4:24). This makes us know that what we hear has consequences. It may be good or bad. Therefore we shouldn't assume that all knowledge is constructive. We ought to take heed because some knowledge are destructive.

You know, sometimes we see people who say they wish to study the books of heretic faiths so as to enable them preach to those who believe in such heresies. The study of such books among Christians has increased of recent and the rise of such heretic faiths has also increased simultaneously. So, how effective is this art of knowing lies so as to prove it to be a lie? Futile.

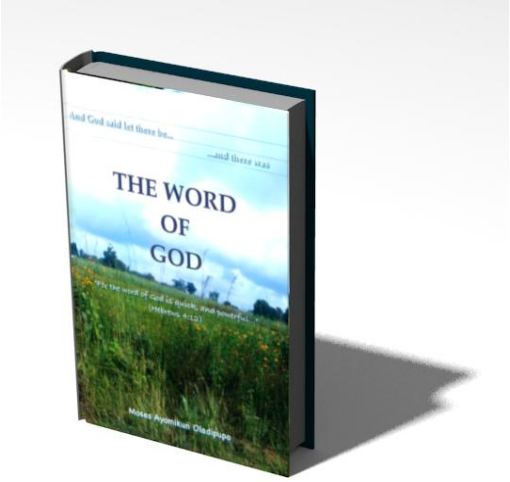
Reading about the blind man who Jesus healed, he knew so little but he was still able to prove the truth about Jesus' righteousness. He knew nothing as compared to the Pharisees, but he confounded them. He didn't know their lies nor their arguments, but he relied solely on the little truth he knew. It is written of the man born blind, "He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." (John 9:25). They had falsely accused Jesus of being a sinner. This man may have had little knowledge of the law or of Jesus' life to know if he were a sinner or not and he acknowledged it plainly, but he based his opinion of Jesus on the little truth he knew; "whereas I was blind, now I see." One will say "but the Pharisees were not convinced." Yes they were not convinced but their anger showed that this man, by his little knowledge of the truth, had defended Jesus most excellently. Their anger was out of envy for Jesus and out of pride, not out of not being convinced. We too, like the man born blind, can, by the one thing we know (by the word of God), silence any adversary.

It were completely useless to read a book of heresy so as to be able to preach to those who are deceived thereby. Knowing the truth in-depthly is sufficient enough to convince any willing soul to come to Jesus.

Prayer: *Dear Lord, I know that it always seem good to read just everything that comes my way for the sake of*

knowledge, but thank you for pointing out in your word that not all knowledge is good for me. Help me to be able to identify those knowledge that are good for me and those that are not. Help me also to be able stay clear off all destructive knowledge and stick to the truth, being determined to know it thoroughly. Help me dear Lord. In your dear name I ask it. Amen.

Excerpted (and edited) my book titled "THE WORD OF GOD" published 2015. Download the full eBook for free HERE!



THE GOOD BOOK OF "THE BOOK OF JASHER"

Posted on March 24, 2018

The Good Book of "THE BOOK OF JASHER"

"...Is not this written in the book of Jasher?"

(Joshua 10:13)

"...behold, it is written in the book of Jasher."

(2 Samuel 1:18)

This is sequel to my article published last week titled, "PURITY IN KNOWLEDGE." Having spoken about avoiding occultic literature and all their writings whatsoever, I'd like to point us to a good book that should by no means be avoided. The good book of THE BOOK OF JASHER.

I like the order in which we find the Bible making direct reference to the book of Jasher. It comes first in the form of a question saying, "...Is not this written in the book of Jasher?" (Joshua 10:13), then the next time we come across it, it comes as if it were an answer to the question saying, "...behold, it is written in the book of Jasher." (2 Samuel 1:18). Seeing it is clearly stated in the Bible by name, I believe it is God's will for us to read it.

I have read the book and it is a great book that emphasises the greatness of God and his dependability? I didn't read it

out of recklessness. Rather I read it because the Bible recommended it. I cannot confidently say it is preserved like the Bible, though I expect that it is very much preserved, but even as it is, it is very helpful and in total agreement with what is written in scriptures. I encourage every Christian who wishes to read it to go ahead.

It is good to understand that the Bible is written in a way that points to specifics and not eleborate on most historical accounts. However it is also important to know that the nature of how the Bible was written seems to make us know that it was written with an expectation either that we (the readers) have a more elaborate from some other account (either by reading some writing or hearing some popular well known story) or that to have a fuller understanding we should make reference to these other sources.

For example, where it is written, "And these are the children of Zibeon; both Ajah, and Anah: this was that Anah that found the mules in the wilderness, as he fed the asses of Zibeon his father." (Genesis 36:24). Now the Bible didn't give us an elaborate account of what the mules were, the encounter of finding them, or why it made reference to him. But in making such a reference to him is just like saying, "this was that Anah that you must have heard about..." A pre-knowledge was expected at the point of writing this probably because it was a popular or incredible event, and seeing the Bible didn't elaborate on it, it indirectly refers us to another source of knowledge to know about Anah's encounter in finding mules in the wilderness.

We see such kind of references all across scriptures. For example we can see such an expression where it reads, "And the sons of Eliab; Nemuel, and Dathan, and Abiram. This is that Dathan and Abiram, which were famous in the

congregation, who strove against Moses and against Aaron in the company of Korah, when they strove against the LORD." (Numbers 26:9). This referred to an account earlier narrated (in chapter 16 of the same book of Numbers) and which was incredible, popular and well known. But in the case of Anah we don't have any any elaborate account. Where do we go get the detailed account from?

The Book of Jasher gave a full account of the story and it is incredible indeed. The full account goes:

“And the sons of Shobal were Alvan, Manahath, Ebal, Shepho, and Onam, and the sons of Zibeon were Ajah, and Anah, this was that Anah who found the Yemim in the wilderness when he fed the asses of Zibeon his father.

"And whilst he was feeding his father's asses he led them to the wilderness at different times to feed them.

“And there was a day that he brought them to one of the deserts on the sea shore, opposite the wilderness of the people, and whilst he was feeding them, behold a very heavy storm came from the other side of the sea and rested upon the asses that were feeding there, and they all stood still.

"And afterward about one hundred and twenty great and terrible animals came out from the wilderness at the other side of the sea, and they all came to the place where the asses were, and they placed themselves there.

"And those animals, from their middle downward, were in the shape of the children of men, and from their middle upward, some had the likeness of bears, and some the like ness of the keephas, with tails behind them from between their shoulders reaching down to the earth, like the tails of the ducheephath, and these animals came and mounted and rode upon these asses, and led them away, and they went away unto this day.

"And one of these animals approached Anah and smote him with his tail, and then fled from that place.

"And when he saw this work he was exceedingly afraid of his life, and he fled and escaped to the city.

"And he related to his sons and brothers all that had happened to him, and many men went to seek the asses but could not find them, and Anah and his brothers went no more to that place from that day following, for they were greatly afraid of their lives."

That said, many historical books claim to be historically accurate and worthy of acceptation but we have to be cautious. Many cults have historical books or accounts they hold true but are only purportedly so. Many of such books are termed pseudepigraphical books because the authors of such books falsely attribute the writings to some other person who never wrote them.

It is also important to know that even most cultures have their own belief of the origin of man even when they don't mean it for religious purpose. Just something they like to tell their children to quiet their curiosity. My culture, as I was told by another friend, claimed that the first man, being Oduduah by claim, fell out of the sky with a tuber of

yam in one hand and a white chicken in the other. This of course should be archaic now and lacks the power to lead any person astray. So we're bound to encounter writings that are opposed to what we believe and avoid them. But particularly harmful are those that are very close to Biblical accounts but presents distorted facts to us. Those that use the names, genealogy, similar accounts that we see in scriptures. We must be very careful with these.

The major thing that disqualifies such books of being worthy of our acceptation is that the Bible did not make any reference to them. But the Book of Jasher is well referenced in scriptures. Apart from the direct referencing of the book (in Joshua 10:13 and 2 Samuel 1:18) we have references that can be found in the Book of Jasher. The apostles too made reference to it's record. Paul wrote to Timothy "Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith." (2 Timothy 3:8). Though the Bible spoke about them, for they are the magicians who withstood Moses, yet the Bible did not refer to them by name. In the book of Jasher however, we see them being called by their names.

It is a great historical book in which you'll see great, interesting, and even make funny discoveries. However I know nothing of its preservation, so any where there seems to be a contradiction with the Bible, stick to the Bible. I didn't find anything contradicting the Bible as such, but the stories the Bible didn't tell seems sometimes as if it were not possible to have happened. However no clear cut contradiction. Rather, it explains a lot of things which are hard to understand in the record of the Bible from the creation to the death of Joshua.

It is also good to note that the Bible's omission of some stories is not out of negligence but because it is focused on the dealings with God with man especially as related to his covenant with Israel and the coming and promise of the Lord Jesus Christ. The story of Anah for example had nothing really to do with these. However the story of Dathan and Abiram showed us the severity with which God judged in the old covenant (though it is an error to assume that he isn't sever in the New Testament too). Many other accounts that are not directly linked to the covenants were not covered in the Bible. For these other accounts we must see in the Book of Jasher. It is a great book that deserves our readership. But other books that claim to be authoritative which we can't trace back to the Bible must be avoided.

Thank you for reading.

Prayer: *Dear Father, thank you for having what we ought to believe well spelt out in your true and eternal word (The Holy Bible). Help us to stick to it as a man holds on to his very life. As we read any other book, guide our hearts aright to maintain a pure knowledge of you. This I ask in Jesus' might name. Amen.*

You can download the ebook HERE for free.

THE PARADE OF LOVE AT ITS BEST

Posted on March 30, 2018

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."
(John 15:13)

In this period of Easter, it is good to look at the events that led to the crucifixion of our dear Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and see what we could learn from it for our edification. For this reason, I wish to share a little something about the demonstrations and actions of love that we can see about the time of our Lord's crucifixion. This is what I term here, **Parade Of Love.**

I shall present the love of Peter for Christ as well as the love of Christ for all. If anyone were to love you the way Peter loved Jesus, your world would be rounder than the globe. But how much more the love of Christ for you and I. I pray that it blesses you as you read.

The Love Of Peter

"Peter said unto him, Lord... I will lay down my life for thy sake."
(John 13:37)

A man whose devotion and love to Jesus was very pronounce in the Gospels was Peter. He had so much love for Jesus and these were seen in most of his actions.

First he had a childlike love that led him to want to be like Christ in every way. He wanted to do everything that Christ did. When Jesus came walking on water, he wanted to do the same.

His childlike love wanted Jesus exclusively and specially. In there conversations with Jesus, others used expressions such as, "we" and "us." Judas (not Iscariot, that is the Judas who we know as Jude who wrote the epistle of Jude), said, "...Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto US, and not unto the world?" (John 14:22). Philip said to him, "...Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth US." (John 14:8). It goes on, but when Peter would speak, he said, "...Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake. (John 13:37). He didn't say "why cannot we follow thee now," but he rather used the personal pronoun.

He had reverential love. When Jesus washed their feet, showing how they ought to serve, others were probably puzzled but did not resist, but Peter could not bear watching his Lord wash his feet and voiced out. The account goes, "Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet..." (John 13:6 - 8).

There're probably other ways Peter showed love for the Lord Jesus, but what I consider the ultimate show of his love was this statement, "I will lay down my life for thy

sake." (John 13:37). Some think Peter was being insincere, but I'm convinced that he really meant what he said and was ready to die for the sake of Jesus. The only problem is that while he was willing to die for him, he wasn't willing to die with him. He wasn't willing to die a death that his rationale taught him to think unwise. For if by giving his life he could save the Master, he was willing to die, but if even by his dying he couldn't save the Master, he wasn't willing to die, for he must have taught that to be a waste.

These things could be seen easily in his actions. When the mob came, he was willing to fight them off. His cutting of the servant of the priest's ear was a show of mastery and a show of the will to fight should it come to that. Such an action would by and by lead to his death and he was willing to risk it in defence of Jesus. However, when he saw Jesus wasn't willing to avoid arrest having commanded him to put his sword away, he fled. It was not so much as a matter of faltering love as it is of a failure to see the wisdom in dying together with him. So he did mean what he said and said what he meant.

His love failed and fizzled off in the presence of the fear of dying with Jesus, yet he couldn't altogether abandon his Master. He followed from afar in anguish of heart. He just couldn't bear the pain of having his Master out of sight. It was the longing for his Master that saw him go into places where he was accused of being one of Jesus followers and he denied the Lord as he had foretold.

The contrition Peter felt when he remembered that he had denied his Lord the way he strongly believed he could never do is a product of sincere love. "And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept

bitterly." (Luke 22:61 - 62). **Now that is love.** A love that feels no contrition in the knowledge of its wrongdoing is no love. Love + the knowledge of sin or wrongdoing = Contrition. The painful remorse he felt was another attestation to the sincere love he had.

Lastly, Jesus himself acknowledged that Peter loved him, for he acknowledged that Peter was willing to act according to how he said, for Jesus said to him, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." (Matthew 26:41). The account of Mark used "truly" in place of indeed. So Jesus acknowledged that he wasn't bluffing.

Also, when he asked him three times, "Peter, son of Jonas, do you love me?" he was asking it because he knew he loved him. He saying in essence, "I want you to acknowledge the love you have for me and act accordingly in tending of my sheep."

The lesson we can learn from Peter's love is useful especially for every Christian who have that sincere love for the Lord but experience failure in showing that love. They wish to be holy as such a love for God demands, but they find themselves failing often. They wish to serve more, but they find that they fail to. This causes bitterness like Peter felt. The love for Jesus was there in the heart of Peter but that love failed because he failed to pray and because he had not the power of the Holy Ghost. When however Peter became a praying man and filled with the Holy Ghost, he became a man who willingly suffered persecutions and eventually died for the Saviour. If we must live victorious Christian lives, we must learn to pray and be filled with the Holy Ghost and with power. No matter the intensity of the passion of our love, it avails nothing to do good works if power is not giving to us from on high. The same applies to

having the desire to go to Heaven. The desire can avail nothing for Jesus clearly says Luke 18:24 that many would indeed seek to enter but shall not be able. So desire, whether by love or not cannot bring to fruition good works. It can only by the power of the Holy Ghost. There's no other way to have the Holy Ghost and power except by means of prayer (Luke 11:13).

The Love Of Jesus!

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

(John 15:13)

"...I lay down my life for the sheep."

(John 10:15)

To attempt to talk on the love of Christ is to attempt to talk about something too well known and yet can't be overemphasised. I consider this almost futile because when you've spoken so much, you look at the things you've covered about his love, and looking at the immensity of that love, you'll discovered you've said close to nothing. But to point to us how his love was demonstrated in the period around his crucifixion and resurrection which we celebrate every year at Easter, I wish to talk briefly on his love.

First we see the intensity of his passion for us all in his statement which goes, "But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." (Matthew 26:29). This was the key verse of my book "**THE ZEAL OF THE SON OF GOD**," in which I explained how this verse showed the passion of Jesus, showing to us that he's going to deny himself the merriment of drinking of the fruit of the vine until our salvation is complete. He has been observing this fast for over 2,000 years as at this present time. **Now that is love. That is passionate love.**

One may say, "well, he meant only his disciples which were with him at the table," but hear this, "God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." (Hebrews 11:40). All the saints, from righteous Abel to the apostles and down history lane to this present time cannot be made perfect (speaking in terms of final salvation) without us and the saints to come. Not until we all gather together in Heaven shall all be fulfilled when we shall all meet at the supper of the Lamb and drink of the fruit of the vine anew. He referred to you and I too. **Now that is love.**

Next we see his love in his prayer for us. His prayer was not a selfish love but a passionate one. He prayed for us all in tears and heavy drops of sweat mingled with blood. It was with much passion and earnestness that caused him to be in that state. **Now that is love.**

Next, we see his love in refusal to be saved from the crucifixion for you and I. He didn't need the assistance of his disciples, he could have sent for angels to come to his defence, but seeing the damnation that awaits you and I, he chose the shame and death of the cross. **Now that is love.**

Next, after his resurrection, he went in search of Peter to restore him despite the fact that he denied him. His dealings with Peter after his resurrection showed that he loved him so much as he loves each and everyone of us. He found him and made sure he dealt with his feeling of guilt and restored him not with a common commission, but with the prime commission of feeding his sheep. He forgave to the uttermost. **Now that is love.**

The last I'll point out is the love he showed for us. When a man is about to leave the world, why should he care so much about what goes on after him. It is only love that would make him make decision about how things shall go well with the ones he's leaving behind. The level of care in making such decisions is dependent on the level of love he has, and not the care for his own personal well being. When Jesus thought of his sheep, he gave the responsibility of feeding and tending the sheep on account of love. When he asked Peter thrice to feed his sheep, he made it to be on the condition of his love for him and this was because Jesus loves his church so much that he won't hand over the well being of his church to just anybody. He gave it to a one who he knows full well loved him and would go any length for that love if he had been prayerful. **Now that is love.**

We could go on and on, but I don't intend to be tedious on the subject. But as we ponder on the death and resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, let us not miss the blessedness of pondering on the pure love that was on parade about this period in history. We can see

quite clearly that Easter, not valentine, is the parade of love at its best.

May the blessedness of the this Easter celebration fill our hearts and minds with that pure holy and celestial love we find at its best in Jesus Christ. Thank you for reading.

Prayer: *Thank you dear Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ for such a love you've showed us. We are undeserving yet you've poured your love abundantly upon us. We can't be sufficiently grateful. As we celebrate this Easter, please help us to be filled with that celestial love and give us the grace to be prayerful that our love does not fail. This we pray in Jesus' mighty name. Amen.*

LOYALTY TO POWERS

Posted on Apr 15, 2018

"There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things?"

(Luke 13:1 - 2)

I once sat in front of a television watching a news station, and to my great astonishment, I heard that a group of "Christians" had joined in protest aimed at oustering a seating president and forming barricades against the armed forces. I was surprised because, these were claimed to be Christians and I had to write to the station broadcasting this news. The body of my message went something like this:

"Hello, I'm one of the people that follow your station very closely. I have noticed some error of which I'm quite sure is not common only to your media. This is regarding the people you call Christians. That is your saying that Christians are participating in the revolt against the government in [that country]. But it is absolutely impossible for a Christian to be involved in a revolt against any constituted authority. Especially not on the basis of economy or whose ally is who, which is most definitely the

reason for the protest. Economy is certainly out of the way. On what basis can you call a person a Christian? Because he goes to a building called church? No. However to bring this misconception to an end it is good to know that people were first called Christians (meaning Christ-like) in Anthioc, when the people there said these people who preach Christ are like the Christ they preach. So a Christian is a Christ-like person and the other parts of the Bible emphasises this too. Consider now the person of Christ. Is it possible for Christ to involve himself in rebellion against a constituted authority? Christ too had a brutal person in authority during his time. I'm not saying [the president] is brutal or not, but you say he is, or at least support those who say so. People in Christ's time complained to him that Pilate had committed the atrocity of brutally killing people who were sacrificing [note: they were performing religious obligations] and mixing their blood with the sacrifice (Luke 13:1), but this didn't make him rebel against Pilate. He even paid his tax and remained submitted to authority even till death. A Christian is basically a person who has the Bible as the final authority in his life. I am not taking sides on who is good or bad, but clearly saying that no Christian can fit into the category you are describing. So every time before you call a people Christian (even if they say they are), do be careful to observe if these people's actions are like that of Christ or not. Not any religious person who goes to church is a Christian. Please promote this true meaning of Christianity or if you won't at least don't say any of those protesters are Christians."

So, we as Christians know of a lot of crisis going on the world, but we should know our role. Our role is that of praying for our leaders and not to go to the streets in violent protest and confronting security forces. I am not saying that we should pray only when there are crisis, we

ought to pray for them always (1 Timothy 2:1-3). Those who protest don't know that often, they are just like flies that can be squashed. That is how weak they are. We know that Gaddafi was killed by protesters but it was not by the powers of protesters that this happened. Never in history have a people rebel against their government and prevailed. They may record some minor success, such as was recorded in the world's greatest revolutions of which one of them is the French Revolution but in the end they were still a failure. But on our knees, we have the greatest power. While Herod was going about brandishing his sceptre and throwing godly men in jail including Peter, Peter himself slept, but the church prayed hard for him and he was set free. Thereafter, God moved the heart of Herod to be arrogant and struck him dead miserably. I haven't heard of any group of rioters who on there own could execute full justice on a leader but God on behalf of the church on her knees did so. All these things were written for us to learn, but it baffles me that people who read the Bible could take to the streets in protests and say they are Christians. How?

Of recent, I heard of a bomb blast in Lahore, Pakistan, targeted at a church which claimed many lives and injured many. The role the church of Pakistan played after the incident was very noble indeed. All they kept appealing to the Christians for was simply, "keep calm." They kept reminding the obviously grieved Christians of who they represented with such powerful expressions and meaning. They did not make railing remarks against the government or security forces. Rather, their comments tended to appreciate their effort that made the loss less grievous. They condemned every form of violence that ensued, they denied the so-called Christians who were involved, and they made sure the name of the noble Lord was not tarnished. It is not news that the Pakistani Christians are

about the most persecuted in the world, yet they have been very noble in their conduct. These they did because they knew the loyalty of Christ to government. They knew they ought to be a shining light in this dark world. They knew that the Lord says "But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." (Matthew 5:39). In this respect, I give kudos to the church of Pakistan. Being involved in violence has never been God's will for his church. For this reason, Paul said in Philippians 2:14-16 "Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain." Contrary to those who were withstanding security forces, the church of Pakistan and those who like them heed Biblical injunctions are the true shining lights.

If we have any grievances, we should appeal to the government in supplication and by modest means. We have seen men who related to their government in the kindest manner. The letter to King James written by the translators of the King James Bible is an example of this. Very humble, polite, and noble. He was given all his rightful honour. One will only have to read through history to see how Christians have always prevailed through quiet and peaceable lives as well as fervent in prayers. The saints have trod this path of imitating Christ in being loyal to the government, let's fall in line. Be a shining light.

Excerpted (and edited) my book titled "THE LIGHT AND THE SHINNING LIGHT" published 2015. Download the full eBook for free HERE!

Prayer: *Dearest Lord Jesus. I know that it is hard to be loyal to powers that neither recognise you and are not themselves loyal to you, but help us to follow your example in submitting to the powers you have put in place. Give us wisdom and understanding in this respect. Thank you dear Father. Amen.*